# CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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# CONG dumps DMK for TVK

TN Political Divorce: Congress severs its 11-year ties with DMK; AICC in-charge for TN Girish Chodankar says Cong supports TVK on condition that there should be no 'communal forces' in the alliance; move triggers sharp reaction from DMK, which terms it backstabbing.

**CHENNAI/NEW DELHI**

Breaking its long-standing alliance with DMK, the Congress on Wednesday jumped ship to support the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) to form the next government in Tamil Nadu and announced that the new alliance will continue for the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.

Congress in-charge for Tamil Nadu Girish Chodankar said that the people of the state, especially youth, have delivered a very clear, strong and overwhelming verdict for a secular, progressive and welfarist government that believes in constitutional principles.

"…the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) has decided to extend its full support to the TVK to form the government. Our support shall be conditional upon the TV keeping out from this alliance any communal forces that do not believe in the Constitution of India," Chodankar said.

He added that the TVK and Congress will strive to bring back the "glorious days" of late Chief Minister K Kamaraj and that the alliance was founded on mutual respect, appropriate share, and shared responsibility between the two parties.

"This alliance…is not only for the formation of this government, but also for future elections to the local body organisations, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha," he said.

He added that Vijay and Rahul Gandhi jointly pledge to respect this historic verdict of the people of Tamil Nadu for a secular and progressive government, and to fulfil the dreams and promises of the people, especially Tamil Nadu's youth.

Congress quitting the DMK alliance was expected especially after Rahul Gandhi spoke to Vijay on the day of election results. Congress wanted to quit the DMK alliance and join TVK before elections, but senior leaders decided to contest the elections with the ruling party.

Congress and the DMK have contested every elections from 2004 to 2026, except the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. The alliance was stitched by Sonia Gandhi in 2004 to take on the BJP.

**Alliance with TVK to uphold secularism: DKS**

The decision has been made to keep the BJP away from power. The secular forces should be united. No matter how much pressure was exerted by the AIADMK and BJP, the TVK did not join hands. Our party has taken a decision to preserve the secular force and the interests of Tamil Nadu..
—DK Shivakumar, DyCM

**A foolhardy decision: DMK joint secretary Annadurai**

The Congress' step to align with TVK a "foolhardy decision" and driven by the need to "satisfy a egos".
—Saravanan Annadurai, DMK joint secretary

**Why break-up & new alliance**

With Vijay's TVK needing support of 10 more MLAs to form a majority government, the party needs to get in talks with other parties in the State. The DMK and the AIDMK, at this moment, do not seem to be the natural allies for power sharing with the TVK. The first sign of some alliance arrangement is coming from the DMK's old ally the Congress.

**TN Assembly math**

| | |
|---|---|
| Total seats: | 234 |
| Majority mark: | 118 |
| TVK strength: | 108 |
| Short of: | 10 |

**DMK's rocky relationship with Cong**

**1960s-1970**
The DMK came to power in 1967 by defeating Congress, advocating against Hindi imposition.

**1971**
Following a split in Congress, the DMK-M Karunanidhi aligned with the Indira Gandhi-led faction (Congress-R) and swept the 1971 elections, beginning a new era of political cooperation.

**1980**
Following the split with MGR-led AIADMK, the DMK aligned with the Congress to face Lok Sabha polls, winning 37 seats.

**1990-2000**
After several years of opposing sides, DMK-Cong united for 2004 Lok Sabha polls, sweeping the state.

**2009-2011**
They continued this partnership for Lok Sabha and Assembly polls resoectively, despite tension over the 2G scam.

**2004–2013**
The longest, most stable alliance phase, where they were part of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) at the Centre and state level.

**2013**
The DMK withdrew from the UPA over Sri Lankan Tamils issue.

**2019**
The alliance reformed to fight elections against the AIADMK-BJP combine in the Lok Sabha elections.

**2021**
The alliance fought the TN Assembly poll together against the BJP-AIADMK combine.

**2024**
They continued the tie-up under the UPA/INDIA bloc umbrella to take on the BJP-AIADMK allaince in the Lok Sabha elections.

**2026**
In a major shift, the Congress quit the DMK to join the Vijay-led Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) to form a governemnt.

**Besties face a loyalty test!**

- Rahul Gandhi and Vijay's friendship goes a long way; they first met in 2009 and have remained in touch ever since.
- Both the Congress and TVK believe leveraging this relationship will help both parties in the long run.
- While the Congress aims to revive in Tamil Nadu, Vijay will gain national attention, allowing his TVK to play a role in national politics.

**'Elder brother' not anymore?**

The fact that Rahul refused to share the dais with DMK chief MK Stalin, whom he once described as his "elder brother", during this election was a strong hint that their ties were heading towards a break-up.

# BJP sets May 9 swearing-in date after historic Bengal win

**KOLKATA**

The oath-taking ceremony of the first BJP government in West Bengal will be held at Brigade Parade Ground here on May 9, marking the saffron camp's arrival in power in a state after decades on the political fringes.

The ceremony, scheduled to begin at 10 am, is expected to witness the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president Nitin Nabin, several Union ministers and chief ministers of BJP- and NDA-ruled states, party sources said. "The new BJP government will take oath on May 9 at 10 am at Brigade Parade Ground," state BJP president Samik Bhattacharya said on Wednesday.

Even as the BJP leadership kept its cards close to the chest on the chief ministerial face, Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari has emerged as a frontrunner in internal discussions after cementing his position as the party's principal mass leader in Bengal politics.

Adhikari, once among Mamata Banerjee's closest lieutenants and a key architect of the TMC's rural expansion in districts such as Purba Medinipur, crossed over to the BJP ahead of the 2021 assembly elections and went on to defeat Banerjee in Nandigram in one of Bengal's fiercest political battles. Five years later, he again found himself at the centre of Bengal's political churn by beating Banerjee in her own turf at Bhabanipur by over 15,000 votes.

Other names for the CM post doing the rounds include Bhattacharya, Union minister Sukanta Majumdar and former Rajya Sabha MP Swapan Dasgupta, though party insiders indicated that the leadership was inclined towards projecting a "bhumiputra" face rooted in Bengal's linguistic and cultural ethos. The BJP bagged 207 of the 294 assembly seats in the recently concluded elections, ending the Trinamool Congress's uninterrupted 15-year rule and scripting the saffron party's biggest breakthrough in a state where it once struggled to open its electoral account.

Significantly, the swearing-in ceremony will be held on the 25th day of Baisakh in the Bengali calendar — observed across the state as Rabindra Jayanti, the birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore — lending the event a deeper cultural symbolism.

A meeting of the newly elected BJP MLAs has been convened on May 8 evening, party sources said, though the leadership remained tight-lipped over the final choice.

## Assam CM meets Guv, new govt likely on May 12

**GUWAHATI**

Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday submitted his resignation to Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya to facilitate the formation of a new government in the state.

The chief minister also submitted the resignation of his council of ministers to the Governor at the Lok Bhavan. The Governor asked Sarma to continue in office till the formation and swearing-in of the new government.

Following the formal notification of the results of Assam Elections 2026 and to enable the formation of the new government, Sarma tendered his resignation as chief minister along with that of the council of ministers to the Governor Laxman Prasad Acharya, the office of the chief minister said in a social media post.

Indicating that new government would be formed after May 11, Himanta told reporters that the date for swearing in ceremony would be decided according to schedule of PM modi. "We want the presence of the PM on this occasion as NDA has got a historic mandate of 102 seats in the state," he added.

# TVK chief Vijay meets TN Guv, stakes claim to form govt

**CHENNAI**

TVK chief Vijay on Wednesday met Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Arlekar at the Lok Bhavan and staked a claim to form the government in the state.

Vijay on Tuesday sent an email communication to the Lok Bhavan here staking his claim to form the government backed by his party MLAs and exuded confidence of proving the majority. Including the two seats that Vijay won, the TVK had secured 108 seats out of 234 member strong assembly.

A source in the TVK said he had written a fresh letter on the subject and also requested the Governor to have the swearing-in ceremony at 11.30 am on May 7.

Meanwhile, police said arrangements are on for the swearing-in at the Nehru Stadium.

Vijay's party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), needs at least 10 seats to hit the majority mark of 118.

The next step is for Vijay to prove his government's majority in the house.

# Mideast strife hits breweries; industry seeks price relief

**BENGALURU**

Owing to the West Asia conflict, the brewery industry has experienced an unprecedented escalation in costs and supply disruption and hence, the Brewers Association of India (BAI) has urged the State Governments to allow suppliers a price increase of up to 15 to 20% to at least partially recover the costs.

BAI has also sought, as an interim relief, reduction in the manufacturing levies by around Rs 3-5 per bulk litre to create a cushion to absorb rising costs. "The war has unleashed a massive input cost increase which keeps growing. Glass bottles prices have risen by around 20%, paper cartons have increased by almost 100%, and cost of materials such as LDPE, BOPP and adhesives have gone up by 20 to 25%. Freight and logistics costs have also risen by 10%. Rupee has fallen by almost 4% against US Dollar, adding to the cost of imports."

# By-poll victories reflect public endorsement of welfare schemes: CM

**MYSURU**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday attributed the Congress party's success in the recent by-polls to strong public support for the government's welfare schemes, asserting that the results reflect a clear endorsement of its policies.

Speaking to reporters at Mysuru airport, the CM said victories in constituencies such as Davanagere and Bagalkot demonstrate that voters have responded positively to the government initiatives. He dismissed opposition criticism, alleging that rivals were relying on "conspiracies" rather than constructive politics.

**'Govt will complete 5-year term'**

Addressing speculation over a possible change in leadership, Siddaramaiah maintained that the government would complete its full five-year term. He said that he would abide by the decision of the party high command, but clarified that he had no information regarding a change of guard. "If called, I will go to New Delhi," the CM added.

He also indicated that elections to local bodies would be conducted soon, signaling the government's intent to strengthen grassroots democratic institutions.

**'Sringeri rout result of BJP conspiracy'**

On contentious Sringeri election result, Siddaramaiah alleged a "criminal conspiracy" by the BJP during the counting process. Claiming that 255 valid votes, who were in favour of a Congress candidate, were invalidated, he accused officials of tampering with ballot papers. "The party will challenge the outcome in court," the CM clarified.

IPL VENUE ROW

# 'B'luru was all set for IPL final, playoffs'

**BENGALURU**

The Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) has issued a media clarification noting its disappointment over the decision to allot IPL playoff and final matches to other venues, despite Bengaluru's readiness and preparedness to host them at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

In its statement, KSCA said President and former India cricketer Venkatesh Prasad had been in direct communication with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), formally expressing the association's willingness and full preparedness to conduct the high-profile fixtures in Bengaluru.

The association highlighted that IPL matches held in the city this season were conducted smoothly, with strong crowd management, efficient operations, and positive spectator feedback. KSCA said this reaffirmed its capability to successfully host major cricketing events.

KSCA further stated that it had submitted a detailed communication to the BCCI outlining its operational framework and logistical readiness. It noted that similar arrangements have been followed consistently since the inception of the IPL in 2008, including during earlier playoff matches hosted in Bengaluru.

According to the clarification, the communication was factual and intended to provide transparency regarding operational and stakeholder requirements involved in hosting large-scale events.

While expressing disappointment over the decision, KSCA said it respects the BCCI's authority in finalising venues for IPL matches. The association added that it had not received formal reasons for the decision.

KSCA reiterated that it remains fully committed and prepared to host national and international cricket matches in the future and will continue to extend cooperation to the BCCI, franchises, government authorities, and all stakeholders.The association also thanked the media and cricket fans for their continued support and understanding.

The statement was issued by Vinay Mruthyunjaya, official spokesperson of KSCA.

**BCCI snubs B'luru**

- Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad to hold IPL final on May 31.
- HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala to host Qualifier 1 on May 26.
- New International Cricket Stadium in New Chandigarh to see Eliminator (May 27) and Qualifier 2 (May 29).
- M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru was originally designated to host the final.

# 5th BRICS SAI Leaders' Summit begins in B'luru

**BENGALURU**

India is hosting the 5th BRICS Supreme Audit Institutions Leaders' Summit in Bengaluru from May 7 to 8, focusing on the theme "Ease of Living with a Focus on Urban Mobility."

The event is being organised under India's BRICS Chairmanship 2026 by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) of India.

The summit brings together 42 delegates, including heads of SAIs from BRICS member countries and partner nations, to discuss audit practices, share experiences and strengthen public financial accountability systems. Collectively representing over three billion people, BRICS nations are addressing common urban challenges such as mobility, housing, sustainability and access to essential services.

Comptroller and Auditor General of India K Sanjay Murthy will address the inaugural session.

## QUICK READ

### Man walks into office, steals six laptops in minutes

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

A man walked into a private firm in HSR Layout and stole six laptops within minutes of the office opening on April 30. According to a complaint by Linking Spaces Technologies Pvt Ltd staff, the suspect arrived on a two-wheeler, parked outside and entered through an open door around 9.30 am. He swiftly collected six laptops from desks, packed them into a bag and fled. The theft was noticed shortly after by employees. Police said the complaint was filed two days later. CCTV footage from the office and nearby areas has captured the accused, and efforts are underway to trace him. A case has been registered under BNS Section 305.

### FIR filed over provocative message

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

An office-bearer of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) has filed a complaint against a man identified as 'Dore' for allegedly posting provocative messages on WhatsApp targeting Virajpet MLA A.S. Ponnanna. Complainant B.N. Anand said the accused posted a message on April 29 stating, "Even Ponnanna has two daughters; wait and watch, karma returns," in a group named "Kodagina Samasyegalu." Police said the message was posted in response to another member's comment. Based on the complaint, High Grounds police registered a case under BNS Sections 192 and 352. Notices have been issued and investigation is underway.

### Govt revokes suspension of IPS officer

**Bengaluru**

The State government revoked the suspension of senior IPS officer K. Ramachandra Rao (1993 batch) and reinstated him into service with immediate effect. Following his reinstatement, he has been posted as Director General of Police (Police Manual), a newly created post equivalent in rank to DGP-level positions. Rao, who was serving as DGP, Directorate of Civil Rights Enforcement, had been placed under suspension on January 19, 2026, pending disciplinary proceedings. The action followed the emergence of videos on social media allegedly showing him in compromising situations within his office premises. Formal disciplinary proceedings were initiated on March 18, 2026. Earlier, in 2025, he was also sent on mandatory leave after allegations surfaced involving his stepdaughter's alleged gold smuggling case at Kempegowda International Airport, where it was claimed that she misused police protocol privileges linked to him. However, he was later cleared of those allegations after an inquiry. Rao is scheduled to retire from service on May 31, 2026.In a separate administrative order issued on Wednesday, the State government also announced transfers of three IPS officers in the rank of Inspector General of Police. Sandeep Patil has been posted as IGP, Northern Range, Belagavi, replacing Chetan Singh Rathor, who moves to the CID (Economic Offences wing). Anupam Agrawal has been appointed as IGP, Karnataka State Reserve Police.

# Sweet and staggered: Bengaluru to host multiple mango melas this season

## Flexible scheduling ensures fresh arrivals reach markets despite uneven harvest patterns

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Bengaluru is set to host not one but several mango melas this year, with organisers opting for a staggered schedule to accommodate fluctuating harvest cycles across Karnataka. The annual mango and jackfruit mela, organised by the Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation Ltd, will be held at multiple venues to ensure both farmers and consumers benefit.The first mela will be inaugurated on Friday at Cubbon Park and will run until May 17. This year's approach marks a departure from the usual single-event format, driven by unpredictable weather patterns that have altered fruiting timelines in different regions.While mangoes from Ramanagara, Kanakapura and parts of Uttara Karnataka are ready, the crop in Kolar—one of the state's largest mango belts—is yet to ripen. Officials said a separate mela will be organised at Lalbagh Botanical Garden once Kolar's produce reaches markets. KSMDMCL Chairman B.C. Muddugangadhar noted that pests such as thrips, along with recent hailstorms, have significantly affected yields in Kolar and Chikkaballapur. In Srinivasapura taluk alone, 8–10 percent of fruits reportedly fell prematurely. "If we waited for Kolar's crop, mangoes from other regions would have perished," he explained.To widen access, the board is also planning mini-melas across neighbourhoods, including Sahakarnagar, Electronics City, Whitefield and National College Grounds in Basavanagudi, in coordination with civic authorities.The Cubbon Park mela will feature around 50 mango stalls and seven jackfruit stalls, offering a wide range of varieties. These include popular mangoes such as Badami, Mallika, Rasapuri and Sendhura, along with the GI-tagged Kari Ishad from Uttara Kannada. Jackfruit varieties like Rudrakshi and Shivarathri will also be available.

Organisers emphasised that all fruits sold will be naturally ripened, avoiding harmful chemicals. With many farmers now using digital platforms and WhatsApp-based sales, the melas aim to complement direct marketing while ensuring quality produce reaches consumers across the city.

## Video of woman bathing recorded, police search for accused youth

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Mahadevapura police have launched a search for an unidentified youth who allegedly filmed a 23-year-old woman while she was bathing in a rented house in Garudachar Palya. According to the complaint, the incident occurred between 9.30 pm and 9.40 pm on April 29. The woman, a software engineer who moved to the area nine months ago, noticed someone recording her from a nearby building and raised an alarm. The suspect fled with the phone. The victim has expressed fear of the video being circulated online. Police have registered a case, inspected the spot and initiated efforts to trace the accused.

## Lokayukta cracks whip on KR Circle flooding, seeks lasting solution

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

The Karnataka Lokayukta has stepped in decisively over the recurring flooding at the KR Circle underpass, with Justice B.S. Patil directing officials to present a permanent solution to the long-standing civic issue.

The move follows the Lokayukta's personal inspection of the underpass on April 30, a day after heavy rain once again submerged the stretch near the MS Building. The site has remained a major safety concern since May 2023, when a 23-year-old techie lost her life after her car was trapped in deep water.

Despite a suo motu case and multiple inquiries since then, the latest flooding has exposed gaps in implementation of corrective measures. During the ongoing probe, engineers from storm-water drain and underpass divisions reportedly blamed each other for the failure, prompting strong criticism from Justice Patil.Expressing displeasure over the lack of coordination, he stressed that safe and well-maintained roads are part of the fundamental right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution. He warned that continued negligence poses a serious risk to public safety.

To ensure accountability, the Lokayukta has widened the scope of the inquiry, bringing several senior officials under scrutiny.

# Hot summer fuels surge in chilled beer sales across Bengaluru

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

After a sluggish 2025, Bengaluru's beer market is witnessing a notable revival this summer, with soaring temperatures driving up consumption across the city. Traders and industry stakeholders say the heat has brought back demand, though policy changes and pricing uncertainties still cast a shadow over long-term growth.According to the Excise Department, beer sales in January 2026 rose by 10.6 percent compared to the same month last year, touching 27.9 lakh carton boxes. While February saw a dip of 4.6 percent, the trend quickly reversed, with March recording a 14 percent increase and April registering the highest growth at 21 percent.Sampath Kumar, Vice-President of the Karnataka Wine Merchants' Association, attributed the surge largely to seasonal demand and the ongoing IPL season. "Consumers tend to prefer beer over hard liquor during hot weather, especially while watching matches," he said. However, he cautioned that frequent policy shifts and fluctuating pricing continue to create instability in the sector.Pub owners echoed similar concerns, noting that while summer and college holidays have boosted footfall, the gains are modest compared to losses suffered over the past year due to repeated regulatory changes.Vinay Chandrashekar, founder of Long Boat Brewing Co in Marathahalli, highlighted evolving consumer preferences, particularly among younger drinkers. "There is growing demand for low-alcohol beers, around 2–3 percent, such as Berliner Weisse styles. These are light, refreshing and often infused with flavours like watermelon, mango or cucumber," he said.Industry officials also pointed to anticipatory stocking ahead of potential tax revisions as a factor behind the spike.

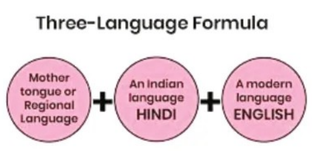
**Rising temperatures revive demand, but policy uncertainty continues to trouble traders**

### Why sales are rising

R. Venkatesh Kumar, Commissioner of the Excise Department, said the increase is driven by summer demand and pre-emptive stocking by manufacturers. A recent draft on taxation and MRP revisions prompted companies to lift higher quantities in April to avoid shortages and adjust to upcoming price changes.

# KDA urges scrapping three-language formula to improve Kannada outcomes

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU




The Kannada Development Authority has recommended dropping the three-language formula in schools and adopting a bilingual approach to arrest rising failure rates in Kannada in SSLC examinations.In a report titled "Why do Karnataka children fail in Kannada", recently submitted to the Department of School Education and Literacy, the authority noted a steady increase in failures over the past decade. The percentage of students failing in Kannada as a first language rose from 9.6 in 2016 to 12.9 in 2025. For Kannada as a second language, failures increased by 3.3 percent to reach 11.7 percent, while pass percentages in Kannada as a third language saw a marginal dip.

The report highlights shifting student preferences, with those opting for Kannada as a third language dropping sharply by 68 percent over ten years. At the same time, the number choosing Kannada as a second language rose by 40 percent. There has also been a slight decline in students selecting Kannada as their first language, while those choosing English in that category have increased notably. Calling the trend a "paradox", the report observes that Kannada as a first language is performing worse than non-native languages, pointing to deeper issues in pedagogy, curriculum design and assessment methods. It stresses the need for urgent reforms to make language learning more effective and engaging.Prepared by a team led by educationist V.P. Niranjanaradhya along with Kannada teachers across the state, the report also found disparities across social groups and regions. Students from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Category 2B communities recorded higher failure rates, while coastal and Malnad districts outperformed parts of north Karnataka.To address these concerns, the authority has suggested revamping textbooks to focus on language development rather than rote learning. It recommends incorporating simple stories, poetry, dialogues and creative expression, supported by visually engaging materials in classrooms.The report further emphasises prioritising language skills in assessments and strengthening foundational learning from the primary level. It also proposes incentives such as scholarships, educational priority and government job preferences for students excelling in Kannada, aiming to restore interest and improve outcomes in the language.

# ICCTAC 2026 highlights emerging trends in AI, cybersecurity and computing

**BENGALURU**

The 14th International Conference on Current Trends in Advanced Computing (ICCTAC 2026) at Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University) brought together leading academicians, industry experts and students to explore the evolving landscape of artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and advanced computing.Inaugurating the conference, Manpreet Anand, Country Head of EC-Council India, emphasised the importance of curiosity-driven research. "Research begins with curiosity and the courage to question," she said, urging participants to pursue knowledge with depth and confidence.Delivering the presidential address, Fr. Dr. Augustine George CMI highlighted the rapid evolution of computing systems and underscored the growing role of technological innovation in both academia and industry. Guest of Honour P. Vimal Laxman, Scientist E at CDAC, Chennai, shared insights into India's technological progress and key contributions of CDAC in advancing computing capabilities.

The conference featured a wide range of keynote sessions and technical discussions. Dr. S. Ramachandran from HFS Research spoke on "Physical AI for Competitive Advantages," offering perspectives on integrating AI into engineering solutions. Prof. Eiko Takaoka of Sophia University addressed ethical concerns in her talk on "Human Dignity in the Age of AI," particularly in healthcare applications.Cybersecurity and emerging threats were key themes, with Dr. Manish Kumar of RV University discussing next-generation security strategies. Chalapathi Koneni, a data engineering leader based in the United States, highlighted challenges in deploying AI systems at scale, while Chaitanya Valaparla conducted a hands-on workshop on AI-driven research methodologies.

Adding an industry perspective, Vijai Tirumala of Swiss Re spoke on innovation and adaptability in the AI era.

Organised with technical co-sponsorship from the IEEE Bangalore Section and in collaboration with Sophia University, Tokyo, the conference also featured paper presentations, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange across disciplines.

## Woman creates ruckus at star hotel, assaults police officers

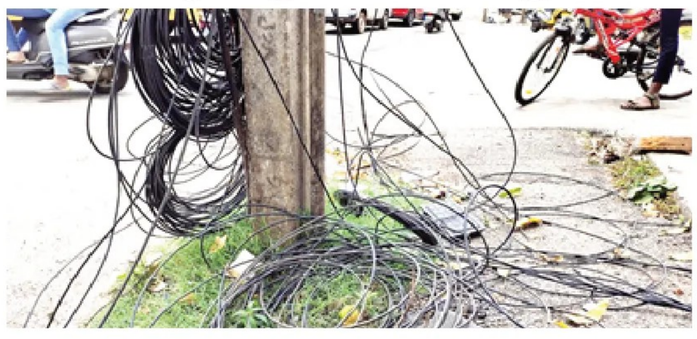
**BENGALURU**

A 23-year-old woman from Mumbai was arrested for allegedly creating a disturbance at a five-star hotel on Palace Road and later assaulting police personnel at a station in the city.The accused, identified as Taniya Dhila, had come to Bengaluru to attend an event at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre. According to a complaint filed by Sub-Inspector Lakshmi, the police helpline (112) received a distress call about a commotion at the Shangri-La Hotel Bengaluru.

**DANGEROUS HANGING WIRES**

# *Live wires and deadly lapses: Danger hangs over Bengaluru's streets*

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU



A loose cable brushing against a tree branch or lying across a footpath could be the unseen hazard that turns a routine commute into a life-threatening situation. Following last week's heavy rains, Bengaluru's fragile civic infrastructure has once again been exposed, with snapped cables and dangling wires posing serious risks across the city.Officials from the Greater Bengaluru Authority said nearly 300 trees and 600 branches collapsed during the downpour, bringing down a tangled network of telecom, internet and cable TV lines — and in some cases, live electric wires. Two electrocution deaths reported during the week highlight the severity of the threat.From residential neighbourhoods to busy commercial hubs, the danger is widespread. Footpaths have become potential death traps, with wires hanging low from trees or lying unattended on the ground. "How do we know which wire is safe?" asked K. Sharmistha, a resident of Langford Road. Crowded areas such as SJP Road and Avenue Road are equally affected, with overhead cables crisscrossing narrow lanes, making it nearly impossible to distinguish between harmless lines and live wires. In South End Circle, a motorist narrowly escaped harm when a cable suddenly fell onto his vehicle, underscoring the unpredictability of the hazard.Traders say the problem stems from unregulated and haphazard cable installations by multiple service providers. Rahul Goyal, Vice-President of the Karnataka Hardware and Allied Merchants' Association, noted that cables are often laid without proper permissions or planning. "Many defunct wires continue to hang, adding to the chaos," added trader Arun Jain.

## QUICK READ

### Rain brings relief to Bidar after heatwave

**BIDAR**

Bidar experienced a sudden change in weather after a day of intense heat, with rainfall bringing much-needed relief to residents. The district had been reeling under scorching sunshine since morning, causing discomfort due to rising temperatures. By evening, dark clouds gathered over the region, followed by showers in several areas including Chikkapete, Markal, Gadagi, and Astur. The rain helped cool down the atmosphere significantly, easing the heat conditions. The unexpected weather shift brought relief to people who had been struggling through the hot summer day, offering a refreshing break from the harsh temperatures.

### Raichur Gets New Deputy Commissioner Puvitha S

Raichur

The Karnataka government has appointed Puvitha S., IAS officer of the 2016 batch and Managing Director of KUIDFC, as the new Deputy Commissioner of Raichur district. She replaces Nitish K., a 2015-batch IAS officer, who served in the post since July 2024. During his tenure, Nitish focused on improving sanitation, infrastructure, and administrative efficiency in the district. He initiated cleanliness drives, helped organize an Army recruitment rally, and played a key role in shifting the Deputy Commissioner's office to a new building. He also worked on tourism development proposals and successfully conducted the Raichur District Festival. With the new appointment, expectations are high for continued progress.

### Free summer camp for children in Kalaburagi

Kalaburagi

A free summer camp for children aged 5 to 16 years will be held from May 12 to May 26 at Rangayana in Kalaburagi. The camp is being organised by the Women and Child Development Department, the Deputy Director announced. The daily programme will run from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM and will include activities such as drawing, handicrafts, clay modelling, karate, yoga, meditation, group singing, group dance, drama, and traditional games. Registration is open until May 10, with only the first 60 applicants being accepted. Interested parents must submit two photographs and age proof. For details, they can contact the department office or Bal Bhavan staff.

# Clay pot demand rises amid Vijayapura heat

Rising heat in Vijayapura boosts clay pot demand, reviving traditional eco-friendly water storage and supporting local potters

Vijayapura

Extreme summer temperatures in Vijayapura district have led to a sharp rise in demand for traditional clay pots, as residents turn to natural cooling methods to beat the heat.

Known as the "City of Domes," Vijayapura is witnessing increased sales of earthen pots across roadside stalls and busy junctions. Households, offices, and shops are increasingly storing drinking water in clay pots instead of modern refrigeration systems.

The renewed interest in clay pots is driven by their natural cooling property, where water remains cool due to slow evaporation through porous clay walls. This method is considered healthier compared to artificially chilled water, especially during peak summer.

The trend has also revived traditional livelihoods, providing a boost to potter families who had seen declining demand in recent years. Many artisans report selling hundreds of pots daily, helping improve income during the otherwise difficult summer season.

clay pot water has also gained popularity for being eco-friendly, as it is made from natural materials and does not generate environmental waste. This has encouraged more people to adopt sustainable lifestyle choices.

Local vendors like Mahesh Kumbar say that while demand peaks only during summer, the current heatwave has significantly increased sales, offering crucial financial support to rural craftsmen dependent on this seasonal trade.

The district administration's efforts to provide shaded drinking water points at major locations have also complemented the trend, encouraging commuters to prefer natural cooling options.

Overall, the revival of clay pot usage highlights a blend of tradition, health awareness, and environmental consciousness driven by rising temperatures.

# Passengers suffer long waits amid heat in Yadgir stretch

**YADGIR**

Severe summer heat has intensified commuting hardships in the Yadgir–Kalaburagi region, where passengers are enduring long waits for buses along National Highway 150.

Hundreds of villagers are reportedly forced to wait for hours at bus stops due to inadequate public transport services, despite increased travel demand during the ongoing wedding season.

Locals allege that the Transport Department has failed to provide sufficient bus frequency to meet commuter needs.

The situation has become particularly difficult for residents travelling between rural areas and urban centres in Yadgir and Kalaburagi. Passengers from villages such as Wadi, Nalwar, Shahabad, Ladlapur, Halkarti, Ravor, and Malgatti are among the worst affected, often waiting for extended periods under the scorching sun.

Elderly people and school and college students are facing significant hardship due to extreme weather conditions.

In many cases, buses are either delayed or overcrowded, leaving commuters stranded. Some services reportedly pass without stopping due to heavy passenger load.

A commuter from Nalwar, Sharanappa, said he had to travel on a two-wheeler after waiting over two hours for a bus while taking his daughter for college admission in Kalaburagi, highlighting the urgency of the situation.

Residents have expressed anger over what they describe as the negligence of transport officials and lack of response from public representatives.

They are demanding immediate steps to increase the number of buses and improve service frequency.

Locals also stressed the need for better planning and monitoring of rural transport routes to ensure reliable connectivity, especially during peak travel seasons and extreme weather conditions.

### Yadgir villagers protest over drinking water shortage

Residents of Saudagar Tanda in Yadgir taluk staged a protest demanding urgent supply of drinking water amid severe summer hardship. Protesters carried empty pots and footwear to express their anger against authorities, alleging prolonged neglect of their basic needs. They claimed that despite giving officials a one-week deadline, no steps have been taken to resolve the issue. Villagers said an overhead water tank built nearly three years ago has still not been made functional, worsening the crisis. Social activist Umesh K. Munnal accused officials of inaction despite repeated complaints. The villagers warned of a road blockade on May 9 on the Yadgir–Sedam main road if the issue is not resolved soon.

*Karnataka Cabinet approves funding to resume flights between Kalaburagi, Bidar and Bengaluru under VGF scheme support*

# Kalaburagi, Bidar airports to regain flight services

**KALABURAGI**

Air connectivity between Kalaburagi, Bidar, and Bengaluru is set to resume soon after the Karnataka Cabinet approved financial support for airline operations under the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme.

The decision is expected to revive suspended services from Kalaburagi and Bidar airports, which have remained non-operational for several months.

Earlier, Star Air operated flights on the Kalaburagi–Bengaluru route but discontinued services from October 8 last year, citing suspension of the UDAN scheme and aircraft shortages.

Since then, passengers from the Kalyana Karnataka region have been forced to travel long distances via road or rely on connecting routes through Hyderabad or train services, causing inconvenience and longer travel time. To address the issue, a high-level meeting was held under the leadership of Infrastructure Development Minister M B Patil, with participation from Ministers Priyank Kharge and Eshwar Khandre.

Airline operators were also invited to submit proposals for restarting services.

Following discussions, the state Cabinet approved ₹28.47 crore annually as financial assistance to operate flights on the Bengaluru–Kalaburagi–Bengaluru and Bengaluru–Bidar–Bengaluru routes.

The support will be provided under the Viability Gap Funding model, with 80% of the funding expected to come from the Kalyana Karnataka Region Development Board.

Officials said the initiative aims to ensure stable and continuous air connectivity to boost regional development, improve business travel, and enhance access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities for people in northern Karnataka.

The move is seen as a significant step toward strengthening aviation infrastructure in the region and improving integration with the state capital and other major cities.

### Fire services rush after Bidar gas leak incident

**BIDAR**

A major fire incident was reported in Bidar city after a leak in an underground gas pipeline triggered flames in the Jail Colony area, causing panic among residents.

The incident occurred when a pipeline of Bharat Gas reportedly developed a leak beneath the road surface, allowing gas to escape and spread along the roadside. The leaked gas subsequently caught fire, with flames rising approximately 7–8 feet high, creating a tense situation in the locality. Residents immediately attempted to contact the company's emergency helpline, but alleged that there was no prompt response. They then alerted the Fire and Emergency Services Karnataka, which dispatched personnel to the spot without delay.

## Village accountant caught in Lokayukta bribery trap

**BIDAR**

In a significant anti-corruption operation, a village accountant was caught red-handed by Lokayukta officials while allegedly accepting a bribe at a roadside dhaba on the outskirts of Maragunda village in Bidar district.

The accused, Shivakumar, serving as the Village Accountant of Maragunda, was allegedly involved in demanding ₹5 lakh from a villager, Mahadev Shantappa, for processing a house mutation.

The complainant, unwilling to pay the illegal demand, approached authorities, leading to a planned trap operation.

Acting on the complaint, officials from the Karnataka Lokayukta set up a surveillance operation. During the operation, Shivakumar was caught while accepting ₹2.5 lakh, which was part of the total bribe amount allegedly demanded.

The exchange took place at a roadside eatery located near Maragunda, where officials intervened at the right moment and apprehended him.

The raid was conducted under the leadership of Bidar Lokayukta Deputy Superintendent of Police Hanumantharaya.

In addition to the main accused, his associate Sharanayya was also taken into custody for questioning.

Preliminary reports suggest that the accused had assured the complainant of quick mutation clearance in exchange for payment, which led to suspicion and eventual reporting of the matter to Lokayukta authorities.

Following the successful operation, a case has been registered against the accused, and further investigation is underway to determine whether the accused was involved in similar corrupt practices in other cases.

Lokayukta officials reiterated that strict action will be taken against public servants involved in corruption and misuse of office.

They also encouraged citizens to come forward and report bribery cases without fear, assuring confidentiality and swift action.

The incident highlights the continued vigilance of anti-corruption agencies in Karnataka and their efforts to ensure transparency and accountability in public administration, particularly in rural land and revenue services where such cases are frequently reported.

## Yadgir women face issues under Shakti Scheme

**YADGIR**

Allegations of non-acceptance of digital Aadhaar documents have sparked criticism in Yadgir district, with women passengers claiming difficulties while availing benefits under the State government's Shakti Scheme Karnataka.

The issue revolves around the use of DigiLocker, a government-supported digital platform that stores official documents such as Aadhaar cards in electronic form. Under the scheme guidelines, women are allowed free bus travel upon presenting valid identification, including digital Aadhaar. However, commuters allege that some bus conductors are refusing to accept these digital documents.

In one reported incident, women passengers from Saidapur travelling on a KSRTC bus faced inconvenience when the conductor allegedly refused to accept Aadhaar shown via DigiLocker on mobile phones. The passengers had misplaced their physical Aadhaar cards and attempted to use the digital version instead. They further alleged that they were asked to deboard the bus before intervention by fellow passengers helped them continue the journey.

Women commuters claim such incidents are not isolated and occur frequently, with conductors sometimes citing reasons such as lack of seats or insisting on physical documents, thereby denying scheme benefits.

KSRTC officials have been urged to issue clear instructions to staff regarding acceptance of digital identity proofs and proper implementation of the scheme. Passengers have also demanded visible guidelines inside buses and a grievance mechanism to report misconduct.

Women's rights representatives have criticised the inconsistent implementation, stating that rural women dependent on public transport are facing repeated inconvenience. They have called for strict action against staff who violate rules and undermine the intent of the welfare scheme.

## Vijayapura officials urged to act on climate change

**VIJAYAPURA**

District-level officials in Vijayapura have been urged to work in coordination to effectively address climate change challenges and implement key performance indicators under state action plans.

Vijayapura Chief Planning Officer of the Zilla Panchayat, C.B. Kumbar, stressed the importance of collective responsibility among departments during a training programme on the Karnataka State Action Plan on Climate Change (KSAPCC). The event was held at the Zilla Panchayat hall and organised by EMPRI in collaboration with the Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology.

He assured full institutional support for implementing climate-related initiatives and emphasised the need for coordinated planning and execution across departments to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Dr. Pavitra P. Nayak, Research Scientist at EMPRI, delivered a detailed presentation on climate policies, adaptation strategies, and the role of various departments in mitigating climate change impacts.

**GAURAMPET FIRE SCARE**

# *Hill fire sparks panic in Devadurga area*

**DEVADURGA**

A sudden hill fire near Gaurampet in Devadurga taluk of Raichur district triggered panic among residents flames were spotted around 9:30 PM behind a fuel station area.

The fire is suspected to have been caused by extreme summer heat conditions, according to preliminary observations by officials. The blaze quickly spread across the hill slope, alarming nearby residents and prompting immediate alerts to emergency services. Fire and emergency personnel rushed to the spot soon after receiving information and began firefighting operations. However, efforts were significantly hampered due to the absence of proper road connectivity to the hilltop, preventing fire tenders from reaching the exact location. Devadurga witnessed tense moments as flames continued to spread in the dry vegetation area near Gaurampet, located behind a Bharat Petroleum outlet. Locals in surrounding foothill areas remained on edge as the situation developed. Fire officer Ravikumar stated that lack of access routes has made operations difficult, but teams are making continuous efforts to bring the fire under control. Forest officials also indicated that the rising temperature and dry conditions are likely contributing factors.

Alimuddin noted that intense heat conditions in the region may have triggered the incident, though the exact cause is still under assessment. Authorities are continuing firefighting operations, while residents have expressed concern over recurring fire risks during peak summer.

## Falling groundwater levels devastate Shahapur farmers

**SHAHAPUR**

Intense summer heat has led to a sharp decline in groundwater levels in Shahapur taluk of Yadgir district, severely affecting horticulture farmers and dryland agriculture.

Farmers cultivating crops such as papaya, pomegranate, and lemon are facing severe water scarcity as borewells and farm ponds dry up. Many standing crops are reportedly withering before harvest, causing significant financial distress to the farming community. In Shahapur, farmers who depend heavily on borewell irrigation say the situation has worsened due to rising temperatures and increased water demand. Some growers are now forced to purchase tanker water at high cost to save their crops.

A papaya farmer, Jagadevi Hiremath, said they earlier managed irrigation using stored borewell and canal water, but extreme heat has drastically increased water requirements. She noted that even crops nearing harvest are at risk of total loss due to lack of moisture. Similarly, farmers in regions under the Krishna command area report that vegetable crops are drying up at the germination stage itself. They say falling groundwater levels have made irrigation unreliable, further deepening the crisis.

Narayanpur Left Bank Canal and related canal systems such as SBC, MBC, and IBC have been highlighted by farmers as potential lifelines. They have urged authorities to release water from reservoirs like Almatti and Narayanpur to help recharge groundwater and support irrigation.

# Wealth and governance must be shared equally: CM Siddaramaiah

## CM said government aims equality, noted caste still exists, and emphasized reformers' vision of rational, caste-free society

**MYSURU**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah asserted that wealth and governance must be distributed equally among all sections of society, reiterating his government's commitment to social justice.

Speaking after inaugurating the Sri Shivayogi Siddarameshwara Jayanti celebrations organized here on Wednesday, he said the government's goal is to ensure equal share and equal opportunities for all. As long as an equitable society is not achieved, demands from marginalized communities will continue. The vision of social reformers has always been to eliminate caste hierarchies and promote rational thinking. However, that caste divisions still persist in the country.

Emphasising inclusivity, the CM said equal opportunities must be ensured for all deprived sections. Quoting Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, he highlighted that political freedom and access to education are essential to eradicate the caste system and enable social, economic, and political progress. The State government has implemented five guarantee schemes benefiting all 7 crore people of Karnataka without discrimination.

The governance today is guided by the Constitution, unlike earlier times when Manusmriti influenced societal norms. Ambedkar taught them that human beings must love one another and not hate.

Referring to the teachings of Sri Siddeshwara Swamiji, Siddaramaiah said people must earn through honest work and share their wealth equitably. The citizens to actively participate in productive activities and follow the principle of "Kayakave Kailasa" (work is worship).

Minister for Backward Classes Welfare and Kannada and Culture, Shivaraj Tangadagi, said government schemes are reaching the most marginalised, including the Bhovi community, due to the leadership of the Chief Minister. There is a need for the inclusion of the Voddar community under the Bhovi Development Corporation and to build Sri Siddarameshwara community halls in every district.

Religious leader Sri Immadi Siddarameshwara Swamiji described Siddarameshwara as a true "Kayaka Yogi" whose teachings remain relevant today. He also praised the contributions of senior writer Prof. S.G. Siddaramaiah, who was conferred the Kayaka Yogi Siddarameshwara Award for 2025–26 during the event.

Speakers emphasised the importance of education, unity, and self-employment, noting that government jobs can accommodate only a small percentage of the population.

Several dignitaries, including ministers, legislators, and senior officials, were present at the function.

# Minister Patil stresses protection of ancient monuments in Barkur

**UDUPI**

**Minister highlighted Barkur's historical importance, proposed committee under Jagadish Shettar, and urged report preparation to restore and preserve its heritage authenticity**

Tourism and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H.K. Patil has called for urgent steps to restore the historical importance of Barkur and protect its ancient monuments without altering their original character. He made the statement after visiting the Panchali Agheshwara temple in Brahmavar taluk and reviewing nearby heritage sites.

The Minister said Barkur, once ruled by the Alupa dynasty, holds deep historical value and its ancient forts, temples and structures must be preserved for future generations. He stressed that the glory of the Alupa rule should be documented and shared with young people so they understand the region's cultural and administrative history. He said preserving heritage is a responsibility of both the government and the public, adding that historical stones, temples and monuments should not be neglected or altered.

The Minister noted that Barkur was once an important administrative centre and ruled peacefully without major conflicts, making it a significant part of Karnataka's early history. He suggested forming an official committee under the leadership of former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar to prepare a detailed plan for restoring the historical identity of the region. He said a report should be submitted soon and action should be taken to revive Barkur's heritage without compromising its authenticity.

The Minister also referred to similar conservation efforts in places like Lakkundi, where thousands of ancient remains, including wells and temple structures, have been identified and are being restored.

He said efforts are underway to convert such sites into open-air museums to preserve their archaeological value and attract tourism. Officials also highlighted ongoing religious and cultural tours connecting several temples and pilgrimage centres across coastal and inland Karnataka to promote heritage awareness.

Local leaders and temple authorities attended the programme and expressed support for conservation efforts and tourism development in the region. The Minister concluded that preserving Karnataka's historical identity is essential for cultural pride, education, and sustainable tourism development.

## QUICK READ

### No power supply today

**Mysuru**

Power supply will be disrupted on May 7 from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM under the V.V. Mohalla subdivision limits. The interruption is due to underground cable work being carried out on the 11 kV Mayura power line, which originates from the 66/11 kV Hebbal power distribution center. Areas affected by the outage include KIADB Layout, surrounding areas of Military Quarters, Nisarga Layout, behind Chitra Residency, Lakshmikanthanagar, and nearby localities. Similarly, due to underground cable work on the 11 kV Yadavagiri power line under the V.V. Mohalla sub-division, there will be a disruption in electricity supply on May 7 from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Areas affected under the 11 kV Yadavagiri power line: Paramahamsa Road (1st Main to 5th Main), Vivekananda Main Road, Yadavagiri 1st and 2nd Main, Dhobi Ghat, Railway Loco Colony, Yadavagiri Church Road, Railway Hospital, Dasaprakash Hotel, and surrounding areas will experience power interruption.

### Applications invited for Grama One centres

**Chikkaballapura**

The government has invited applications to set up "Grama One" centres under the Seva Sindhu scheme. The initiative aims to deliver government services at the doorstep of citizens, including Sakala services, RTI applications, banking support, and other public welfare services. Officials said each centre will operate from 8 am to 8 pm on all days. Around 800 services will be provided through these centres across gram panchayats in the district. Interested applicants can apply online before May 15 through the official portal. Authorities have also provided contact numbers for further information and guidance.

*Representatives questioned lack of notice publication, warning public unaware and denied consultation on tree-felling proposal*

# Activists oppose tree felling plan in Mysuru division

**MYSURU**

Environmental activists have raised strong objections over the alleged failure to publish a mandatory public notice regarding the proposed felling of 561 trees in the Mysuru Division.

In a representation submitted to the authorities, members of Parisarakke Naavu termed the lapse a "serious omission" that undermines public participation in environmental decision-making.

According to them, the notice issued by the Office of the Deputy Conservator of Forests on April 27, 2026, has not appeared in any newspaper so far. They argued that without proper publication in widely circulated dailies, the general public remains unaware of the proposal and is effectively denied the opportunity to raise objections. "Public consultation is a crucial part of such decisions. If citizens are not informed, how can they respond or voice concerns about the felling of hundreds of trees?" the representation questioned.

The group has urged authorities to immediately publish the notice in leading newspapers to ensure transparency and accountability. They have also requested that a minimum window of 10 days be provided from the date of publication for the public to submit objections.

Further, the activists have called for convening a public hearing, in line with established practices followed in similar cases within the jurisdiction. They emphasized that such measures are essential to uphold democratic processes and safeguard environmental interests. The representation was signed by Parisarakke Naavu President A.T. Ramaswamy and General Secretary Parashurama Gowda.

# BJP celebrates election gains across three states

**CHITTAPUR**

At a BJP event in Chittapur, leader Manikant Rathoda highlighted the party's electoral gains in West Bengal, Assam, and Puducherry, crediting Narendra Modi and Amit Shah for boosting support.

He said BJP's vote share and organisation have strengthened despite challenges, encouraging workers to stay active.

Rathoda emphasised voter list verification to ensure electoral transparency and noted such processes may extend to Chittapur.

Leaders stressed grassroots work, booth-level strengthening, and public engagement as key to future success. The event saw participation from local party members, ending with calls for unity and sustained efforts to expand BJP's influence.

# Heat drives wild visitor indoors: A 7.5-foot Rat snake rescued

**MYSURU**

Pic by Hampa Nagaraju

The City of Mysuru witnessed yet another dramatic brush with the wild as a massive 7.5-foot rat snake was rescued from Kumbarakoppal on a sweltering day on Wednesday.

The daring operation was carried out by seasoned snake rescuer Shivakumar, who continues to be a lifeline for both reptiles and residents.

With temperatures soaring across the city, snakes are increasingly slithering into human habitats in search of relief. Cooler corners of homes—near gas cylinders, beneath washing machines, and under staircases—are turning into unexpected hideouts for these silent visitors.

According to Shivakumar, snakes typically enter homes for three reasons: in search of food, water, or to escape predators. They are not here to harm, but to survive. The residents must remain calm and avoid panic.

What makes this rescue even more remarkable is the milestone it represents. This was Shivakumar's 19,500th snake rescue—a staggering testament to his commitment and courage.

As Mysuru heats up, encounters like these are becoming more frequent, serving as a reminder that the city is not just ours—but shared with nature, even in its most unexpected forms.

# Grand musical celebration 'Mysuru Sitar Sambhrama 2026' on May 9

**MYSURU**

Kala Samvahana Trust is presenting 'Mysuru Sitar Sambhrama 2026', a grand celebration of Indian classical music, tradition, and cultural excellence.

The event will be held on 9th May 2026 at 5:00 PM at Karnataka Kalamandira, Vinoba Road, Mysuru. This prestigious musical evening aims to promote and preserve the rich heritage of Indian classical music through an extraordinary sitar ensemble and performances by renowned artists. The program will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and presided by Dr. H.C. Mahadevappa, Minister of Social Welfare Department and District In-charge Minister.

Pujya Swami Krutatmananda of Chinmaya Mission will grace the occasion.

Distinguished guests attending the event include legendary singer H.R. Leelavati, Dr. M. Jagannath Shenoy, and Padma Shri Pt. Venkatesh Kumar, an eminent Hindustani vocalist.

A major highlight of the evening is the performance by internationally acclaimed sitarist Ustad Dr. Mohasin Khan. Grand Sitar Ensemble by Sitar Sinchana, Mysuru, featuring 50+ musicians performing live in harmony. Noted Vocalist Padmashri Pandit Venkatesh kumar will be Star performer of the festival.

Speaking about the event, Dr Shabana Mysuru said that Mysuru Sitar Sambhrama is envisioned as a platform to inspire young musicians and bring audiences closer to the timeless beauty of Indian classical arts.

Music lovers, art enthusiasts, cordially invited to attend and experience this unique cultural celebration.

# MCC's clever trick to stop public urination in City

**MYSURU**

In a creative and somewhat unconventional move, the Mysore City Corporation (MCC) has launched a novel experiment to curb the persistent problem of public urination along the Bengaluru–Nilgiri Road, right in front of the suburban bus stand.

For years, the old compound wall of People's Park had turned into an open, unhygienic urinal, drawing sharp criticism and causing deep embarrassment—especially for women who had to pass by the stretch. Despite repeated efforts by the MCC, including putting up "No Urination" signboards and conducting awareness drives, the problem stubbornly persisted.

The situation was further aggravated by the area turning into a bustling pickup and drop-off point for private taxis. With no proper public urinals nearby, many individuals chose convenience over civic responsibility, reducing the compound wall to a foul-smelling eyesore.

But now, the MCC has decided to fight back—with reflection instead of restriction.

In a striking move, mirrors have been installed all along the compound wall. The idea is simple yet ingenious: when individuals attempt to relieve themselves, they are confronted with their own reflection, triggering a sense of embarrassment and, hopefully, restraint. Officials believe this psychological nudge could succeed where warnings and penalties failed.

"People may ignore boards, but they cannot ignore themselves," an MCC officer remarked, expressing cautious optimism about the initiative's impact.

While the idea has drawn attention for its ingenuity, it also raises several practical concerns. What if vandals damage the mirrors by throwing stones? Who will bear the cost of repairs? More importantly, in the absence of CCTV surveillance, what happens after sunset when visibility drops and monitoring becomes difficult?

There is also the larger question of sustainability—whether such measures can deliver long-term behavioural change without adequate infrastructure like public toilets.

For now, the mirrored wall stands as both a reflection and a reminder—of civic sense, shared responsibility, and the ongoing challenge of keeping public spaces clean. Whether this bold experiment will succeed or shatter under pressure remains to be seen.

# SDPI demands urgent fix for hospital chaos

**HUMNABAD**

A petition was submitted to the District Health Officer by the Social Democratic Party of India demanding urgent action to improve the government hospital in Humanabad. Leaders said nearly 600 to 800 outpatients visit the taluk hospital every day but basic facilities are missing. They alleged ambulance services are delayed, cleanliness is poor, and patients are forced to buy medicines from outside pharmacies. It was also said that some doctors are working in private hospitals during duty hours which affects patient care. Officials were told that a ventilator is unused for years and ICU services are not properly used in emergencies. Accident and heart patients are being referred to district or private hospitals without emergency treatment.

**INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY 2026**

# *Museums on wheels in Mysuru on May 18*

**MYSURU**

In connection with International Museum Day on May 18, 2026, a special programme titled "Museums on Wheels" will be organised in Mysuru under the ICOM 2026 theme, "Museums Uniting a Divided World."

The Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage has arranged this initiative to provide students, researchers, history enthusiasts and the general public an opportunity to visit selected museums.

The programme will be inaugurated at 8:00 AM on May 18 at the Wellington Government Museum and Art Gallery, Irwin Road, Mysuru. The tour will proceed to the Regional Museum of Natural History, Payana (Car Museum), and the Railway Museum, before concluding at the Wellington Government Museum and Art Gallery.

Participants will be taken by bus to these museums, where they will be introduced to the antiquity, literary, and cultural significance of various artefacts on display. The programme is open to school and college students, researchers, history enthusiasts, and the general public aged between 10 and 60 years.

Interested participants can register their names before 5:30 PM on May 16, either in person at the Office of the Commissioner, Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage, Karnataka Exhibition Authority premises, Indiranagar, Mysuru, or via email at ddheritagemysore@gmail.com and commr.amh@yahoo.in, or by contacting the phone numbers 0821-2424671 / 2424673.

For more details, participants may contact Sunil Kumar M., Curator (7829404796), according to a press release issued by the Commissioner of the Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage.

## QUICK READ

### Yadava Sangha to issue ID cards for election

**CH News**, Chitradurga
The District Yadava (Golla) Sangha has announced that identity cards will be issued to members ahead of the upcoming Sangha election. The election is scheduled for May 17 at the Government Girls High School in Chitradurga city near Rangayyanabagilu. Officials said ID cards will be distributed at the Sangha office from May 7 to May 16 between 11 am and 5:30 pm. Members are requested to bring two recent passport-size photographs and a Xerox copy of Aadhaar card. Sub-Divisional Officer Dr. K.J. Kantaraj urged all eligible members to collect their cards within the given time.

### Millet procurement and distribution set in Mandya

**CH News**, Mandya
The district administration has announced that millet procurement under the Minimum Support Price scheme for 2025–26 is underway. Purchase centers have been opened across the district to buy millet directly from farmers. Officials said the Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation has directed that all procurement work must be completed by May 15. The collected millet will be distributed under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) for the months of May and June. Farmers who are yet to sell their produce have been urged to use this opportunity. Authorities aim for smooth implementation without delays or confusion.

# Investigation ordered into alleged illegal transfer planning

Minister warned legal action for misuse of authority, stressed transparent counseling-based forest department transfers without external influence

**CHAMARAJANAGAR**

Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre has ordered a detailed investigation after allegations surfaced that a zonal forest officer prepared a secret transfer list in the Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

The issue came to light in Bandipur Tiger Reserve after a handwritten list reportedly circulated on social media, claiming to show transfer postings of forest officials.

According to the complaint, the list was allegedly prepared by a Range Forest Officer and included details of officers to be shifted between different zones within the reserve.

The viral document has triggered strong reactions, with many questioning the transparency of transfer procedures in the forest department.

Minister Khandre said the matter is serious and directed officials to verify the authenticity of the document and examine whether it matches any official records or handwriting.

He instructed the formation of a probe team led by the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (APCCF) to conduct a detailed inquiry.

The Minister also warned that strict legal action will be taken against anyone found misusing authority or damaging the reputation of the department.

He emphasized that transfers in the forest department are conducted transparently through a counseling-based system and should not be influenced by unofficial groups or individuals.

He said any attempt to manipulate postings through internal networks would harm administrative discipline and public trust.

Officials said the alleged list reportedly included posting details of several officers across different zones of Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Gundlupet taluk.

Meanwhile, the Minister also visited a proposed flyover site near Mysuru and reviewed tree removal issues affecting construction work, instructing officials to explore options for saving and relocating trees where possible.

Forest department officers accompanied him during the inspection and were asked to submit a detailed report on environmental impact and feasibility of the project.

Authorities said the investigation into the transfer list controversy will continue and action will be taken based on findings of the inquiry team.

# Agriculture Society president raises school regulation issue

**Maheshwarappa urged publishing illegal school details, ensuring accountability, and protecting students, parents, and teachers through stricter education department oversight and awareness**

**CH NEWS,** CHITRADURGA

District Agricultural Society president N.R. Maheshwarappa has directed the education department to take strict legal action against unauthorized schools operating in the district.

He gave these instructions while presiding over the executive committee meeting held at the office of the Joint Director of Agriculture in Chitradurga.

He said several private schools are misleading parents by falsely claiming affiliation with CBSE or ICSE boards while actually running different syllabi. He called it a serious fraud and urged officials to publish a list of such schools before the next academic admissions begin.

He also said action must be taken against schools that violate rules on minimum infrastructure, safety standards and land requirements. He warned that some institutions are running multiple syllabi on the same campus, which is against regulations.

Maheshwarappa suggested that details of illegal schools should be published in newspapers to protect students and parents from deception. He also urged education officials to ensure accountability and protect the interests of both teachers and students.

District Agricultural Society treasurer Bhakta Prahlad raised concerns about protection of government school property and said encroachment of school land must be prevented. He also suggested proper registration of donated lands and stronger monitoring of school assets.

The meeting also discussed strengthening Karnataka Public Schools in rural areas to improve access to education.

Officials from the animal husbandry department informed that vaccination against foot-and-mouth disease has been carried out for around 90,000 cattle in the district. They said cattle are now being registered using a digital 12-digit Aadhaar-based tagging system for better tracking. They also announced that insurance compensation for livestock deaths has been revised, with higher support for cattle and small animals.

Members of the society also proposed forming a separate milk union for Chitradurga district and promoting sericulture through training and awareness programs for farmers. Officials said silk farming is being carried out across thousands of hectares in the district with government support and subsidies.

The meeting concluded with a focus on improving agriculture, education standards, and rural development through better enforcement and planning.

*MLA said eye camps across Chitradurga with Shankar Eye Hospital provide free treatment ensuring no citizen left untreated*

# MLA PAPPI LEADS INITIATIVE FOR COMMUNITY EYE HEALTH SUPPORT

**CH NEWS, C**HITRADURGA

MLA KC Virendra Pappi has said that eyes are as important as the heart for human life and everyone must take proper care of their eyesight. He urged people to attend free eye camps and get timely treatment for any vision-related problems.

He was speaking after inaugurating an eye donation and free eye check-up camp held at Little Angel Nursery School and English Senior Primary School in Ward 19 of Chitradurga city.

The MLA said similar camps have been organised across several villages in the Chitradurga Assembly constituency so that no citizen is left without treatment for eye problems. He said the initiative is being carried out in association with Shankar Eye Hospital, providing free medical services to the public.

He added that over 3,000 people have already undergone eye surgeries through these camps and around 7,000 people have received free spectacles. He said all services are being provided without charging money from beneficiaries.

Congress leader Anjinappa Kelgote praised the MLA's efforts, saying that no other representative has conducted such large-scale free eye health programmes in the region. He said private treatment costs are high, but these camps are helping poor families access essential eye care.

He also appealed to the public not to ignore the free health camps and to make full use of the services provided.

District Guarantee Committee President Shivanna and Congress leaders RK Sardar, Wasim, Rahman, Jalil and others were present at the programme. Officials said similar camps will continue in the coming weeks across the constituency to reach more people in need of eye care.

## KEDAMULLAR TO HOST ARRABHASHE BORDER FESTIVAL

**CH NEWS,** MADIKERI

A special Arrabhashe Border Festival will be held on May 13 at 9 am at the community hall in Kedamullar, Virajpet. The event is organized by cultural and literary groups with the aim of promoting semi-language traditions and local heritage. Chief Minister's legal advisor A.S. Ponnanna and Virajpet MLA will attend the programme as chief guests. Several cultural leaders, association heads, and social workers from Kodagu district are also expected to participate. Organizers said the festival will highlight folk culture, local talent, and community unity. A comedy and cultural show will add attraction to the event.

## Mandya says no water crisis, appeals for conservation

**CH NEWS,** MANDYA

District officials have confirmed that there is currently no drinking water shortage in the Mandya Nagar Sabha area, but have urged citizens to use water carefully and avoid wastage during the ongoing summer season.

District Collector Dr. Kumar said precautionary measures are already in place to prevent any future water crisis. He gave this information during a meeting on summer drinking water management held at the city council hall.

The Collector said that officials have been instructed to regularly check water quality and supply levels from 585 borewells under the municipal limits.

He added that water is currently being supplied to 12 wards daily, while 23 wards receive water on alternate days. However, steps are being taken to ensure daily water supply to all 23 wards soon.

Due to rising temperatures, he appealed to the public to use water responsibly and avoid unnecessary wastage. He stressed that public cooperation is important to manage resources during peak summer.

Officials also proposed using 25 percent of municipal funds to improve and upgrade the city's drinking water infrastructure.

The meeting also reviewed commercial infrastructure, where 126 shops built under municipal limits were discussed. Officials said verification of shop owners and documents will be completed before final allotment, with priority given to eligible applicants.

Authorities also said action has been taken against unauthorized advertisements in the city, and official advertisement zones will be strictly enforced.

Tenders for road development under the Chief Minister's fund have been initiated, and works are expected to be completed soon to improve city roads.

Officials also appreciated staff for completing the first phase of the 2026 census work ahead of schedule, including household listings across 261 blocks.

The meeting was attended by MLA P. Ravikumar Gowda, municipal commissioner Pampashree U.P., and other senior officials who discussed ongoing civic works and future development plans for the city.

## Eshwar B Khandre lays foundation for bridge project

**MADIKERI**

Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar B Khandre laid the foundation stone for a new suspension bridge at Dubare in Kodagu district, aimed at improving connectivity and tourism in the region.

The project, worth about Rs 7.3 crore, will be built across the Kaveri River near Dubare and is expected to greatly benefit local residents, forest workers and tourists visiting the famous elephant camp.

The Minister said the bridge will help more than 150 families living in the Dubare Hadi area, who currently face difficulty crossing the river, especially during emergencies and rainy seasons. He added that the structure will also improve access for medical help, daily travel and tourism activities.

He noted that Dubare is a biodiversity-rich region and part of the Western Ghats ecosystem, which is home to many species of plants, animals and birds. He said protecting forests and wildlife is essential as climate change and rising temperatures are already affecting the environment. The Minister also highlighted increasing human-elephant conflict in the state and said expert committees have been formed to study and manage the issue. He assured that funds are available for railway barricades, trenches and other safety measures to reduce damage caused by wild elephants.

He stressed the importance of peaceful coexistence between humans and wildlife and said forest officials must focus on protecting both people and animals. He also said technology will be used to track elephant movement and reduce conflict, especially during crop seasons.

Officials informed that Dubare Elephant Camp, which has a long history, also plays an important role in tourism and wildlife management, with trained elephants used for various activities including Dasara.

Along with the bridge, new staff quarters, vehicles for forest operations, and livelihood support schemes for local residents were also announced.

# Energy Minister orders completion of Kadandale substation

**CH NEWS,** MANGALURU

Energy Minister K.J. George has directed officials to complete the long-pending 400 KV substation project at Kadandale in Moodbidri taluk by July 15.

The announcement was made after a review of ongoing works by KPTCL Managing Director Dr. Ram Prasat Manohar at the project site in Dakshina Kannada district.

Officials said the project had been delayed for nearly three years due to land disputes, but recent efforts by the energy department and senior officials helped resolve major hurdles and restart progress.

The substation is being developed to improve power supply in key coastal districts including Dakshina Kannada and Udupi district, which are important industrial and commercial hubs of the state.

Officials said the project will help reduce voltage fluctuations and power shortages, especially during the monsoon season when demand increases and supply disruptions are common.

The new facility will also allow faster restoration of electricity during technical faults by enabling alternative power routing through the grid system.

Dr. Manohar said the project is crucial for ensuring uninterrupted and quality power supply to industries, households and essential services in the coastal region.

He added that the government has planned a temporary line-clear shutdown from May 6 to May 24 on the existing transmission line to speed up construction work.

During this period, alternative arrangements will be made to manage electricity demand, though short-term load shedding may occur if technically necessary.

Energy Minister K.J. George said providing stable power is a top priority for the government and emphasized that infrastructure delays due to legal issues have now been addressed.

He said continuous review meetings and coordination between departments helped resolve land-related complications and push the project forward.

Officials have appealed to the public for cooperation during the construction phase, stating that the project will bring long-term benefits to Mangaluru, Udupi and surrounding regions.

The government expects the substation to significantly strengthen the coastal power network and support future industrial growth once completed.

**KANNADA CULTURAL REVIVAL**

# *Border areas need stronger Kannada promotion says leader*

**PAVAGADA**

Katta Narasimhamurthy, president of Taluk Kannada Sahitya Parishad, said Kannada programs should be encouraged more in border areas where other languages have strong influence. He spoke at the 112th foundation day of Kannada Sahitya Parishad held at Guru Bhavan in Pavagada town. He said the foundation day is celebrated across Karnataka with great enthusiasm and reminds people about the importance of Kannada language.

He recalled that the Kannada Sahitya Parishad was started in 1915 with support from Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar and Sir M Visvesvaraya for the survival and growth of Kannada. He said today the organization has grown widely and is working in villages and towns to protect Kannada identity and culture. Prabhakar, president of the Kosha, said Kannada Sahitya Parishad is an important body that

works for language, literature, and culture for more than a century. He said being part of the organization is a matter of pride for members.

Officials including IA Narayanappa, Pramod, and Nagaraju participated in the program. Leaders said border regions need more Kannada cultural events to protect language use among young people and encourage participation in literature activities in schools and public programs. They urged government and organizations to increase awareness programs, support local Kannada groups, and ensure that the language remains strong in border taluks through continuous events, education efforts, and community participation without delay.

## QUICK READ

### Tiger attack kills cow in Ponnampet area

**Ponnampet**

A cow was killed in a tiger attack at B. Shettigeri village in Ponnampet taluk on Wednesday morning. Forest department officials visited the spot and carried out an inspection after the incident. Locals said livestock losses are increasing due to frequent tiger movement in the region. They urged the government to take strong measures and provide compensation to affected farmers. Authorities are monitoring the area to prevent further wildlife attacks. Officials have assured villagers that steps will be taken soon to control human-wildlife conflict in forest border villages. Relief efforts are being discussed by authorities now ongoing.

### Dirt Fest 2026 set for thrilling show in Moodbidire

**Moodbidire**

The popular off-road car event "Dirt Fest 2026" will be held on May 10 at Fortune Maidan, Swaraj Maidan in Moodbidire. The event is organized by Team Dynamics Racing, said organiser KTC Nazir. This marks the fourth edition of the competition, which has been held for the past three years. Around 60 to 100 cars from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Goa are expected to participate. Winners will receive cash prizes and trophies. The event will also feature food stalls and entertainment programs to attract visitors and promote motorsport culture in the coastal region.

# R Ashoka demands CBI probe into election delay

Ashoka demanded investigation into alleged influence on officials and stressed need for transparency in the electoral process

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Opposition Leader R. Ashoka has demanded a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry into the alleged one-day delay in declaring election results of a recent by-election, questioning possible pressure on election officials.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru after attending a programme at Vidhana Soudha, he said that even after the result was known, officials delayed issuing the formal declaration without proper explanation.

He said the court had clearly directed that the election certificate must be issued immediately after recount results are confirmed, but the process was delayed by a day.

Ashoka alleged that only a detailed investigation can reveal who influenced or pressured officials during the process and insisted that transparency must be ensured in the electoral system.

Referring to the recent by-elections in Sringeri, he said that D.N. Jeevaraj has now been officially declared elected after recounting and oath-taking procedures were completed.

He also dismissed claims made by Congress leaders regarding vote irregularities, saying that strongroom security systems and CCTV monitoring make tampering impossible. He accused the Congress of making baseless allegations and said such statements reflect political frustration rather than facts.

Ashoka added that the party will review its performance in recent by-election defeats in Bagalkot and Davanagere but said these results will not influence the upcoming Assembly elections.

He expressed confidence that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will return to power in 2028, stating that public opinion is shifting after people better understand welfare guarantees announced by the current government.

He also commented on welfare schemes, saying that while he does not oppose guarantees, he criticises what he called "unscientific promises" made without proper financial planning.

The leader further stated that the BJP has recently recorded strong performances in states like West Bengal and Assam, crediting national leadership for the results.

He announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Bengaluru on May 10, where a large public programme is planned at HAL airport premises with an expected participation of around 15,000 people.

# Cong strengthens position in Bagalkot district

**Campaign was pre-planned under Satish Jarkiholi, with surveys, strong village-level organisation, and booth teams assigned to strengthen Congress outreach**

**BAGALKOT**

The recent by-election in Bagalkot district has significantly altered the local political equation, with the ruling Congress party securing a decisive victory and strengthening its position in the region.

Congress candidate Umesh Meti registered a major win by defeating his opponent Veeranna Charantimath with a margin of 22,332 votes, marking one of the largest victories in the constituency's recent electoral history.

Analysts said Meti's victory was influenced partly by a sympathy wave following the death of his father, along with strong grassroots campaigning and booth-level coordination.

The election campaign strategy was reportedly planned well in advance under the guidance of senior leaders, including Minister Satish Jarkiholi, who played a key role in building the Congress organisational network across villages and polling booths.

Officials said surveys were conducted at the ground level to identify voter trends, and local teams were assigned responsibilities in each panchayat to strengthen campaign outreach.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah was also credited by party leaders for providing political support that helped the Congress retain the seat with a strong mandate.

The victory is being compared to historical electoral records in the region, as it marks one of the highest margins since the early elections in independent India.

On the other hand, BJP leaders are reviewing the reasons behind the defeat, citing weak internal communication, lack of voter outreach, and failure to connect with women and first-time voters as major setbacks.

Party insiders also pointed to internal differences and lack of coordination among local leaders as factors that affected campaign performance. Despite attempts at reconciliation by some leaders, the opposition camp failed to build a united front during the election campaign.

The by-poll results have also drawn attention due to parallel contests in other constituencies, including Davanagere South, where Congress also secured victory, further boosting its political momentum in the state.

Political observers say the results reflect strong organisational planning and voter mobilisation by the ruling party, while the opposition faces a need for major restructuring at the local level.

# Rev Henry Mascarenhas takes charge at Thottam St Anne's Church

**UDUPI**

Rev. Henry Mascarenhas officially assumed charge as the new Parish Priest of Thottam St Anne's Church on Wednesday, taking over from Rev. Denis D'Sa, who was earlier serving at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Ajekar.

The induction ceremony was attended by parish members and church leaders. The outgoing Parish Priest Rev. Denis D'Sa and Parish Pastoral Council Vice President Leslie Aroza welcomed Rev. Mascarenhas and extended their support for his new role. The formal induction was led by Rev. Ferdinand Gonsalves, Dean of the Kallianpur Deanery.

In his address after taking charge, Rev. Henry Mascarenhas expressed gratitude for the affectionate welcome from parishioners. He said the atmosphere at the church reflected a spirit of peace and positivity, which he credited to the leadership and service of his predecessor. He added that the love shown to priests strengthens their commitment to serve the community and sought continued cooperation from the faithful.

Outgoing Parish Priest Rev. Denis D'Sa, in his farewell message, said he cherished the love and support he received during his four-year tenure. He appreciated the parish community's devotion and contribution to the church's development, urging them to extend the same warmth to the new priest.

The event was attended by several clergy members and dignitaries, including Rev. Alban D'Souza of St. Lawrence Basilica, Attur; Rev. Roman Mascarenhas; Rev. Herald Pereira; Rev. Pradeep Cardoza; Sister Sushma Lewis; and Parish Council Secretary Lavina Fernandes, along with a large gathering of devotees.

# Mandya plans data driven road safety push

**CH NEWS,** MANDYA

District Collector Dr Kumar held a meeting with officials from the Center of Excellence in Road Safety at IIT Madras to discuss ways to reduce accidents in Mandya district. He said identifying accident black spots on four national highways passing through the district is important for prevention. Data analysis from CoERS will help authorities understand causes of crashes and plan better safety measures. A training program for engineers from health police and public works departments will be held on May 16 at MIMS Auditorium for data based decision making.

Executive Engineer said necessary steps will be taken to implement the suggestions from the meeting. Dr Roshan, Director CoERS IIT Madras, said the centre is identifying high mortality corridors on national highways and suggesting local solutions to reduce accidents and improve awareness campaigns. District SP Dr Sobharani, Executive Director Public Works Purushottam, RTO and other officials attended the meeting. Officials said coordinated action between departments will be strengthened to ensure quick identification of accident zones and immediate corrective measures. Awareness drives on helmet use, speed control, and safe driving will also be intensified across the district.

The district administration aims to use technology and data support to bring down road accident numbers significantly in the coming months.

Officials emphasized continuous monitoring and coordination with police and transport departments for better road safety outcomes across Mandya district.

# TAMIL NADU ELECTION RESULT SPARKS POLITICAL DEBATE IN KARNATAKA

**HUNSUR**

President of Sathya MAS Foundation Satyappa has said that recent political developments in Tamil Nadu have shown a new direction in Indian politics by rejecting money power, caste influence, and family-based politics. He said the results have created a role model for the country.

He was referring to comments made after TVK party leader Vijay highlighted how a person from a modest background, including a car driver's family and limited formal education, became an MLA through public support. Satyappa said voters in Tamil Nadu have shown that elections can be influenced by public choice rather than traditional political systems.

He said the outcome reflects growing voter awareness and a shift away from caste and wealth-based politics. According to him, people are increasingly choosing leaders based on honesty and service rather than background or influence.

He added that similar political experiments in India, including new regional movements, show that alternative political forces can succeed when they connect with people directly. He cited examples of emerging parties that have challenged established political systems in different states. Satyappa said that if voters believe in clean leadership, development-focused governance, and equality, then alternative political movements can grow stronger. He also said there is a growing discussion that such political changes could influence Karnataka politics in the future. He urged voters to support candidates who work with sincerity, avoid caste divisions, and focus on public welfare.

*MLA said Kaginele Circle traffic makes central statue unsafe, suggesting placement at Kanaka Sheep and Wool Weavers site*

# MLA Sivannavara stresses visibility of Kanakadasa legacy in Haveri

**CH NEWS,** HAVERI

MLA Basavaraja Sivannavara, who also represents the Kuruba community, said that a statue of saint Kanakadasa will be installed at Kaginele Circle in Haveri within the next month. He was speaking at a Shepherd Community meeting held at a tourist temple in Haveri city.

He said Kanakadasa is a respected saint who worked for social harmony through devotion and his contribution should be made more visible in the district where he was born and raised. He added that statues of Kanakadasa have already been installed in several places across the country, and now Haveri will also honour him in a similar way.

The MLA said that due to increasing traffic at Kaginele Circle, installing the statue in the centre may not be suitable for safety reasons. Instead, it will be placed in the area allotted to the Kanaka Sheep and Wool Weavers Cooperative Society.

He said around Rs 10 lakh will be spent on preparing the statue, while the Urban Development Authority has already sanctioned Rs 25 lakh for circle development works. He added that additional funds between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 15 lakh may be required, and he himself will contribute Rs 1 lakh. He appealed to the community to donate generously for the project.

Haveri Urban Development Authority Chairman S F N Gazi Gowdra said the statue installation will be completed within a month and called for unity among community members. He also said this year's Kanaka Jayanti celebrations will be organised at Kaginele Gurpeeth in a grand manner.

Several community leaders and local representatives attended the meeting and supported the plan for the statue installation and celebrations.

**RUDRABHOOMI DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

# *MLA promises upgradation of Rudrabhoomi*

**CH NEWS,** CHITRADURGA

MLA KC Virendra (Pappi) said that the state government guideline mandates every town to have a well-developed Rudrabhoomi and efforts are being made to provide basic facilities accordingly.

He spoke after visiting the Veerashaiva Hindu Rudrabhoomi near Jat Pat Nagar in Chitradurga on Wednesday, where he reviewed the existing infrastructure and noted several shortcomings.

The MLA said priority will be given to improving essential facilities such as drinking water, electricity, toilets, internal roads, compound walls, sheds, and proper cleanliness in the burial ground.

He assured that he would direct officials to take immediate action to resolve the difficulties faced by families during funeral rituals and ensure dignity for last rites.

He further said that Rudrabhoomi is a sensitive space for all communities and should have proper access roads for transporting bodies, lighting arrangements, drainage and protection from rainwater during monsoon.

He added that development work is already being planned in a phased manner and will be expedited with public cooperation. Community leaders present at the site said that complete development of Rudrabhoomi is possible only with joint efforts of authorities and local residents.

Officials including Nagar Sabha Commissioner Lakshmi and Veerashaiva community leaders Shanmukappa, Nagaraj, Santosh, Manjunath, Tippesh, Dwarkesh, Ramesh and others took part in the inspection visit and discussions regarding improvements.

The MLA said he remains committed to ensuring respectful facilities for last rites in all Rudrabhoomis across the constituency.

# Magadi honors Kannada Sahitya Parishad legacy celebration

**CH NEWS,** MAGADI

Magadi Kannada Sahitya Parishad celebrated its 112th foundation day at Hebbalu village in Magadi taluk with participation of students, teachers and literature lovers. The event remembered founder president HV Nanju Adaya and highlighted his contribution to promoting Kannada language and culture.

Tumkur University lecturer Dr Venugopal spoke about the importance of Kannada Sahitya Parishad established in 1915 under the guidance of Mysore rulers. He said Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar and Sir M Visvesvaraya played key roles in protecting Kannada language education and development. Speakers noted that the parishad has worked for more than a century to unite Kannada language literature and cultural identity across Karnataka. Sahiti P Nagaraju said Mysore state rulers supported industries education and agriculture which helped Kannada growth and progress. He recalled Bhadravati paper factory Shivanasamudra hydro project and Mysore University as milestones of development during that period.

Books were distributed to participants and organizers urged students to continue promoting Kannada language in daily life. Kasapa president T N Padmanabha called for remembering HV Nanju Adaya's contributions and preserving his legacy in Karnataka. Teachers and students from Hebbalu and nearby areas participated enthusiastically and raised slogans celebrating Kannada pride and heritage.

## QUICK READ

### Rajasthan cracks down on illegal liquor trade

**Jaipur**

Rajasthan's Excise Department has launched a major statewide campaign against illegal liquor activities, registering 633 cases in five days.

Under the direction of Excise Commissioner Namit Mehta, enforcement teams acted against the manufacture, storage, transport, and sale of illicit alcohol.

Officials arrested 172 people and seized multiple vehicles during raids across districts. Large quantities of country liquor, IMFL, beer, and locally distilled alcohol were confiscated. Authorities also destroyed over 1.4 lakh litres of raw material used in illegal brewing.

Officials said coordinated raids and strict monitoring will continue as part of a zero-tolerance approach to stop the trade.

### Summer heat drives huge rush at city pools

**Ahmedabad**

Rising summer temperatures have led to a heavy rush at Ahmedabad's municipal swimming pools, with nearly 15,000 people visiting daily. The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation said 21 pools are currently open and additional batches have been started to manage the crowd.

Special timings have been arranged for children, learners, and experienced swimmers, while women also have dedicated sessions. To prevent dehydration, ORS is being provided at pool sites, along with strict hygiene and water quality checks. Meanwhile, officials from Vadodara visited Ahmedabad to study its civic facilities and management systems for possible adoption in their city.

### Court orders FIR after deadly boat tragedy

**Jabalpur**

A district court in Madhya Pradesh has ordered an FIR after a tragic boat accident in Jabalpur killed 13 people. The court acted on its own, citing possible negligence by the cruise operator. It alleged the pilot left passengers and failed to help during the emergency. Police have been directed to file a case under relevant laws and investigate fully.

The accident happened at Bargi Dam, where rescue teams recovered all bodies. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief and announced financial aid for victims' families. The court also praised those who tried to save lives during the incident.

# New hope for school reforms in states

The Centre will soon write to West Bengal and Tamil Nadu to join the PM SHRI school reform initiative

**NEW DELHI**

The Central Government is preparing a fresh push to bring West Bengal and Tamil Nadu into the fold of the PM SHRI school scheme.

Following recent election results that reshaped the political landscape in both regions, education officials plan to write to state leaders to break the long-standing deadlock over classroom funding.

The PM SHRI initiative aims to upgrade over 14,500 state-run schools into modern "model institutions." However, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu had previously refused to sign the required agreements, leading to a tense standoff. This disagreement even resulted in the Union government pausing certain education grants last year. Now, the Ministry of Education believes the shift in local governments offers a golden opportunity to restart these vital programs.

In West Bengal, officials are optimistic that the recent change in leadership will simplify the rollout of the National Education Policy. Meanwhile, the situation in Tamil Nadu remains a point of interest following the electoral victory of C. Joseph Vijay's party. Beyond just school upgrades, the Centre is also urging West Bengal to adopt the ULLAS program, which focuses on adult literacy and lifelong learning.

Even in Kerala, where the agreement was previously put on hold, the Centre is seeking a revival of the partnership. By turning these schools into centers of excellence, the government hopes to provide students with better technology and modern teaching methods. For parents and students in these states, the move could finally mean better facilities and more resources in their local classrooms.

Ministry of Education
Government of India
सत्यमेव जयते

### What's PM SHRI?

PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) is a centrally sponsored scheme launched by the Government of India to upgrade over 14,500 existing schools into model, green-certified institutions. Operating from 2022-23 to 2026-27, it aims to implement National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 via high-quality, modern, and inclusive education

## Agri official lands in Rajasthan bribery trap

**JAIPUR**

In a swift anti-corruption crackdown, the Rajasthan Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) arrested a high-ranking agriculture official for allegedly taking a bribe. Anandilal Meena, the Joint Director of Agriculture Extension in Baran district, was caught red-handed while accepting ₹8,000 from local business owners during a carefully planned sting operation.The trouble began when two local vendors, who sell fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides, filed a formal complaint. They alleged that Meena was demanding ₹5,000 from each of them just to verify their mandatory stock registers. Without this official verification, the vendors could not legally continue their business operations. After receiving the tip, the ACB launched a secret investigation to confirm the claims before moving in for the arrest.According to investigators, the official had already pocketed an initial payment of ₹2,000 earlier this week and was pressuring the vendors for the rest.

A trap was set by a specialized team led by Additional Superintendent of Police Kalu Ram Verma. The officers pounced the moment the money changed hands, taking the Joint Director into custody immediately.

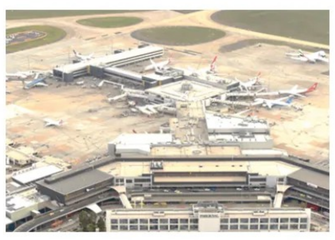
Senior officials, including Inspector General S. Parimala, are now monitoring the case registered under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Authorities are questioning the accused to see if he had targeted other vendors in the district with similar demands.

# Bihar floats tender for Raxaul Airport Project

**PATNA**

In a major move to boost regional travel, the Bihar Government has officially issued a tender for the reconstruction of Raxaul Airport.

Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary announced that this project will transform the Champaran region by connecting the state's border areas to national and international flight networks.



The reconstruction plan focuses on essential airside infrastructure, including the building of a modern runway, taxiway, and apron. Engineering consultancy services are now being sought to kickstart the work. Officials believe that a functional airport in Raxaul will breathe new life into the local economy by making trade and tourism much easier for residents and visitors alike.Chief Minister Choudhary credited the "double-engine government" for the progress, stating that Bihar is now ready to reach new heights of development. This announcement comes during a busy diplomatic week for the state, as the Chief Minister also welcomed Vietnamese President To Lam to the historic city of Gaya. The President's visit is expected to strengthen international ties and promote cultural tourism in the region.For the people of Champaran, the revival of Raxaul Airport has been a long-standing dream. By improving air connectivity, the government hopes to attract more investment and provide faster travel options for the public. As the tender process begins, authorities are focused on ensuring the project moves forward swiftly to bring modern aviation facilities to one of Bihar's most strategic border locations.

## 'Kolkata revival key to boosting eastern India'

**MUMBAI**

The secret to fixing India's economic imbalance lies in the heart of West Bengal, according to Sanjeev Sanyal, a top advisor to the Prime Minister.

Speaking at the National Stock Exchange, Sanyal argued that the real crisis isn't a North-South divide, but a widening gap between a wealthy West and a struggling East.

Sanyal explained that India's rapid growth is usually powered by a few high-performing cities. For the eastern states to catch up, Kolkata must be restored to its former glory as a major financial hub. Despite decades of industrial decline, he believes the city still possesses the infrastructure and history needed to lead a regional comeback. "The revival of the eastern half of India must be about the revival of Kolkata," he stated firmly.

Echoing this sentiment, prominent industrialist Sanjiv Goenka expressed hope that a new political landscape could finally win back investor trust. He noted that the focus must shift from people leaving the state to attracting fresh talent and big capital. Goenka emphasized that for companies to settle in Bengal, the government must provide consistent policies and remove "obsolete" laws, such as outdated land ceiling regulations that currently block major construction.

The consensus among experts is clear: if Kolkata thrives, the surrounding states will follow. By modernizing city laws and creating a business-friendly environment, leaders hope to transform the "City of Joy" into an engine of prosperity that can lift millions in the eastern region out of poverty.

*An Indian court extended the custody of seven foreigners accused of supplying military hardware to Myanmar-based ethnic rebel groups.*

## Foreigners denied bail in Myanmar terror case

**NEW DELHI**

A special court extended the judicial custody of six Ukrainians and one American citizen for thirty days.

The group is accused of training ethnic rebel groups in Myanmar and supplying them with high-tech military hardware. Held under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the suspects allegedly entered India on tourist visas before crossing illegally into Myanmar.

The hearing at Patiala House Court was conducted behind closed doors due to the "sensitive nature" of the investigation. Special Judge Prashant Sharma denied entry to officials from the Ukrainian and U.S. embassies, explaining that while they have consular access to visit the prisoners, they cannot observe the secret legal proceedings. The NIA argues that these individuals are experts in drone warfare and jamming technology, which they allegedly provided to groups linked to Indian insurgents.

Defense lawyers raised concerns about the health of the American suspect, Matthew Aaron Van Dyke, requesting private hospital treatment. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian suspects asked for virtual meetings with their families, but the court noted that strict rules for terror-related cases limit such privileges. The NIA claims the group smuggled a large shipment of drones from Europe through India to reach the conflict zone.Federal investigators are currently tracing the group's digital footprint to see if any local rebel groups assisted their travel. With the extension of their jail time, authorities have another month to uncover the full extent of this international conspiracy that potentially threatens India's national security and border stability.

## Meghalaya bets big on tourism ecosystem

**SHILLONG**

Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma announced that Meghalaya is on its way to becoming a world-class travel destination. Speaking at a special event near Orchid Lake, he emphasized that the state's success depends on everyone working together - from local artisans and students to community leaders - to build a welcoming environment for visitors.

The Chief Minister shared exciting news regarding travel infrastructure, revealing that the expansion of the Shillong Airport runway has been officially approved. The project is expected to be finished within fifteen months, allowing larger planes to land directly in the hills. "This will be a game changer," Sangma noted, as it will make the state much more accessible to international and domestic travelers.

Beyond flights, the government is investing in several "iconic" projects to draw crowds. These include the Shillong Ropeway, a skywalk at Mawkdok, and a unique Rain Museum in Mawsynram. These attractions are designed to highlight the state's natural beauty while providing modern comforts and safety for families.

Tourism Minister Timothy D. Shira added that the sector is now a backbone of the local economy. In 2025, nearly 18 lakh tourists visited the state, and over 150 new projects are currently under development. During the ceremony, the government distributed scholarships to hospitality students and provided financial support to locals opening homestays. By empowering residents to become "tourism champions," Meghalaya hopes to ensure that every visitor leaves with a great story to tell.

COOLING CRUISERS

# *Delhi deploys 13 mobile heat relief units*

**NEW DELHI**

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta took decisive action to protect citizens from a scorching heatwave by flagging off thirteen Mobile Heat Relief Units. These specialized vehicles will roam the streets of the national capital, offering immediate relief to residents, laborers, and commuters struggling under the intense summer sun.Each mobile unit is equipped with vital supplies, including chilled drinking water, ORS packets, and first aid kits. To offer further protection, officials are distributing cotton caps and traditional "gamchas" to help people shield themselves from direct sunlight. Alongside the launch, the Chief Minister released a comprehensive Heat Action Plan booklet, designed to educate the public on staying safe during record-breaking temperatures.The initiative follows a high-level review of the city's water crisis. Chief Minister Gupta has ordered all major treatment plants to operate at maximum capacity to ensure every household receives an adequate supply. She warned that any negligence in handling water-related complaints would lead to strict disciplinary action. The government is also working closely with neighboring states to monitor raw water quality and prevent any shutdowns at treatment facilities. As the mercury continues to rise, authorities have urged the public to stay indoors during peak hours and use the 112 helpline for any heat-related emergencies.

## BCI seeks action against Andhra HC judge

**NEW DELHI**

The Bar Council of India (BCI) has officially asked the Chief Justice of India to intervene following a shocking incident at the Andhra Pradesh High Court. Justice Tarlada Rajasekhar Rao reportedly ordered a young lawyer into 24-hour police custody simply because the advocate did not have a specific copy of a court order during a hearing. A viral video of the incident shows the young lawyer repeatedly apologizing and "begging for grace" with folded hands, explaining that he intended no disrespect.

Despite his pleas, the judge allegedly rebuked him in front of his peers and directed police personnel to enter the courtroom to take him away. BCI Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra described the judge's behavior as "deeply disturbing" and "grossly inappropriate," noting that it has sent a chilling wave of fear through the legal community.

Govt. of Karnataka
**Office of the Executive Engineer,**
**Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, Vijayapur**
**Tel.No:08352-277816, Fax.No:08352-277817,**
**E-Mail:zpebjp9@yahoo.co.in**
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಕಾಇಂ/ಪಂ.ರಾ.ಇ.ವಿ/ವಿಜ/ಇಪ್ರಾ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/2026–27/316 ದಿನಾಂಕ:04.05.2026

**TENDER NOTIFICATION (Two Cover System)**

Executive Engineer, PRE Division, Vijayapura has invited e-tender for the works under the Various Grant scheme for the year 2025-26 Work Indent No. RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25701 **for General Bidders,** RDPR/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT26181 **for SC Bidders,** Rs. 16.17 Lakhs to Rs.68.10 Lakhs Total 2 work vide Tender Publication No.316 Date: 04.05.2026. Last Date for submission of Tender is 14.05.2026 time 5.30 PM.
For more information about the tender, the information can be collected at the website www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in or visit the office of the said Division during office hours.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,**
**P.R.E. Division, Vijayapur**
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/78/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2026–27

**ನಗರಸಭಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಹೊಸಕೋಟೆ**
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಹೊಸಕೋಟೆ– 562114
ಸಹಾಯವಾಣಿ : 27931759, ದೂರವಾಣಿ : 27931221,
Email: itstaff_ulb_hosakote@yahoo.com Web Site.www.hosakotecity.mrc.gov.in
ನಂ:ನಸಹೊ/ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಶಾಖೆ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/ಸಿಆರ್/04/2026–27 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 06.05.2026

**"ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ"** (ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಕೆ.ಟಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ)

ಪೌರಾಯುಕ್ತರು ನಗರಸಭೆ ಹೊಸಕೋಟೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ಇವರಿಂದ 2026–27ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ನಗರಸಭಾ ನಿಧಿ ಅನುದಾನದಡಿ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸ್ಟ್ಯಾಂಡರ್ಡ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯುಮೆಂಟ್ 02ರ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ದ್ವಿ–ಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಡಿ ಅರ್ಹ ದರ್ಜೆಯ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

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2) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳನ್ನು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home** ನಿಂದ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/–
ಪೌರಾಯುಕ್ತರು
ನಗರಸಭೆ, ಹೊಸಕೋಟೆ
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಾ.ಪ್ರ/542/ಶಿರಡಿ ಸಾಯಿ/2026–27

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Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, First Floor,
Zilla Panchayat Building, S. Kariyappa Road,
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Phone No: 080-26716046 Website: http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in
No.EE/PRED/BNG(U)/TND/JE-1/05/2026-27 Dated: 05.05.2026

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**Sd/-**
**Executive Engineer**
**Panchayath Raj Engineering Division,**
**Bangalore Urban Dist, Bangalore.**
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# ‘North Tech Symposium boosts India's defence self-reliance’

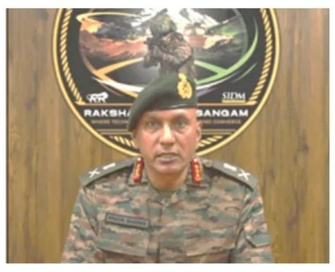
Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Pratik Sharma emphasized the event as a pivotal step in India's

**PRAYAGRAJ**

Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma hailed the North Tech Symposium as a pivotal moment for India’s military self-reliance.

Held in the historic city of Prayagraj, the three-day event concluded with a powerful vision for "Raksha Triveni Sangam"—a unique confluence where the needs of the soldier, the innovation of the industry, and the research of academia merge into one.

For the first time, the Northern and Central Commands of the Indian Army joined forces on a single platform to share their real-world combat experiences. Lt Gen Sharma emphasized that this collaboration is essential to transforming abstract ideas into battle-ready equipment. The symposium featured 284 companies, including small



startups and major private firms, showcasing cutting-edge technologies like drones, AI-driven decision tools, and advanced robotics designed to tackle modern security threats.

The event, inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, served as a massive "marketplace of ideas." High-ranking officials, including Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi, reviewed indigenous innovations that aim to reduce India's dependence on foreign imports. "We are bridging the gap between those who fight on the frontlines and those who build the tools for them," Lt Gen Sharma noted.

With the 2026-27 defence budget seeing a nearly 10% increase, the symposium highlighted India’s growing status as a global hub for military manufacturing. By focusing on home-grown solutions, the Army aims to streamline its procurement process and ensure that every soldier is equipped with the best technology made right here in India.

## QUICK READ

### Delhi CM attends temple festival in capital

**New Delhi**

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta visited the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in R.K. Puram to take part in the annual Brahmotsavam celebrations. She was accompanied by MP Bansuri Swaraj during the visit. The Chief Minister offered prayers for the well-being and prosperity of Delhi residents and said the event reflects India’s rich cultural unity. She encouraged people to participate in such festivals and experience different traditions. The temple, known as a replica of Tirupati Balaji Temple, saw large gatherings of devotees. The celebrations highlighted devotion, cultural harmony, and brought a festive spiritual atmosphere to the capital.

### Sudden rains disrupt life in Shimla hills

**Shimla**

Unexpected and continuous rainfall has disrupted normal life in Shimla and nearby areas of Himachal Pradesh. The showers, which lasted longer than predicted, brought a sharp drop in temperatures and affected daily routines. Local residents said the weather has been unpredictable, with rain continuing beyond forecasts. School children were among the most affected, as many were caught unprepared during school hours and got wet in the rain. Parents also faced difficulties managing the situation. While the rain has cooled the region, it has created inconvenience for commuters and residents as wet conditions continue.

### Violence erupts as police team ambushed Sandeshkhali

**Sandeshkhali**

Violence broke out in Bamanberi village when police and central forces investigating earlier house attacks were ambushed by locals. The Officer-in-Charge of Nazat police station was shot in the leg, while a female constable and several jawans were injured. All were taken to hospital. Officials said tensions are linked to disputes over fish farming ponds, locally called bheris, with groups fighting for control. Police also recovered bags of explosives during searches. Four people have been arrested so far. Residents reported fear and gunfire as security forces continue raids despite orders to maintain peace in the region currently.

### Delhi police arrest mastermind boxer murder case

**New Delhi**

Delhi Police Crime Branch arrested 38-year-old Sumit Rana, wanted in the July 2025 murder of national boxing champion Vikas Bhinda. He was on the run for eight months and had been declared a wanted criminal. On July 29, 2025, Bhinda was shot dead at Baba Haridas Nagar in a planned gang attack linked to old rivalry and extortion. Rana, a hotel management graduate who worked in Malaysia and Dubai, returned to India.

## UDF begins process to select next CM

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

Following a landslide victory in the 2026 Kerala Assembly elections, the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) has officially begun the process of selecting the state’s next Chief Minister. Senior leader Ramesh Chennithala confirmed that while several top leaders are in the running, the final "seal of approval" will come from the party’s high command in New Delhi. The UDF secured a commanding 102 seats in the 140-member assembly, ending a decade of LDF rule. The Congress emerged as the strongest force within the alliance, winning 63 seats, followed by the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) with 22. To ensure a smooth transition, the Congress has appointed senior leaders Ajay Maken and Mukul Wasnik as observers.

# Security upped in Udhampur to ensure safe Amarnath Yatra

**UDHAMPUR**

With the annual Amarnath Yatra fast approaching, district officials in Udhampur have shifted their preparations into high gear.

To ensure a smooth and safe journey for thousands of pilgrims, Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa recently led a detailed review of security plans and basic facilities across the region. The goal is to provide a stress-free experience for everyone traveling to the holy shrine.

A key part of this year's plan involves high-tech tracking. The administration will set up special radio-frequency identification (RFID) kiosks at the local railway station. This system helps officials keep track of travelers and provide quick assistance

whenever needed. Additionally, the district has prepared 31 lodging centers to house the expected crowds. Workers are also busy upgrading essential services, such as clean water and better restroom facilities, at important stops throughout the district.Security remains a top priority for the mission. The CRPF has already begun deploying teams along the highway, with specialized patrols guarding the route from early morning until late at night. Officers are using advanced intelligence systems and extra manpower to keep the path secure between the Chenani-Nashri tunnel and Ramban."Our main job is to make this pilgrimage peaceful and successful," stated a local commander. By combining modern technology with a massive ground force and improved comfort for travelers, the Udhampur administration hopes to make this year's Yatra one of the most organized yet. Travelers are encouraged to use the new facilities as they begin their spiritual journey.

### Tourists flock to Kashmir valley

Srinagar

Kashmir is witnessing a growing influx of tourists as visitors arrive to enjoy its scenic beauty and pleasant weather. The famous Dal Lake, along with cool mornings, has become a major attraction. Tourists from different parts of India are exploring popular spots like Gulmarg and taking shikara rides on the lake. A visitor from Delhi said the experience feels refreshing compared to the hot weather back home.

## Bharadwaj blames negligence for Vivek Vihar fire

**NEW DELHI**

Aam Aadmi Party leader Saurabh Bharadwaj launched a blistering attack on the Delhi government, accusing authorities of criminal negligence following the Vivek Vihar fire. The blaze, which claimed nine lives including a young child, has sparked a political firestorm over alleged delays in rescue operations and a "heartless" attempt to blame the victims for their own deaths.Bharadwaj alleged that while the fire department was notified immediately, it took nearly 50 minutes for teams to actually begin dousing the flames. According to the AAP leader, fire engines arrived twenty minutes late and then spent another thirty minutes struggling with equipment and low water pressure. "People were screaming for help from their balconies, but the government's incompetence burned them alive," Bharadwaj told reporters. He further criticized the official narrative that iron grills and a single staircase trapped the family, pointing out that most homes in Delhi are built with identical layouts.

Drawing a grim parallel, Bharadwaj linked the incident to the Palam fire tragedy from March 18, where nine family members also perished. He demanded the immediate release of the inquiry report for the Palam case, accusing Chief Minister Rekha Gupta’s administration of shifting blame to avoid accountability. "They claim automatic doors trapped the victims, yet residents deny such locks even existed," he added.As the city mourns the loss of the victims, the AAP has demanded a transparent investigation into the fire department's response time.

# Locket Chatterjee calls Mamata ‘former CM’

**KOLKATA**

BJP MP Locket Chatterjee launched a stinging attack on Mamata Banerjee, calling her a "former Chief Minister" who must respect the public's mandate.Following the 2026 Assembly election results, which saw the BJP secure a landslide victory with 207 seats, Chatterjee insisted that the era of Trinamool Congress (TMC) rule is officially over.

The BJP leader stated that the people of West Bengal have given a clear answer and that the Constitution must now take its course. She dismissed Banerjee's claims of election irregularities as a refusal to face reality. "She should know she is an 'ex' now," Chatterjee told reporters, adding that the BJP will not tolerate any further political violence or attempts to interfere with their victory celebrations. She also confirmed that strict instructions have been given to the police to monitor and act against any TMC workers causing unrest. Despite the heavy defeat, Mamata Banerjee has remained defiant, accusing the Election Commission and the BJP of "looting" the democratic process. She has publicly refused to resign or visit the Raj Bhavan, claiming a "moral victory" even as her party’s count plummeted to just 80 seats. This has led to a tense constitutional standoff in the state. With the BJP set to form its first-ever government in West Bengal, the political atmosphere remains electric. The party’s surge from 77 seats in 2021 to a massive majority marks a historic shift in the state’s power dynamics. While the BJP prepares for its oath-taking ceremony, Chatterjee’s remarks underscore the party's firm stance: the people have spoken, and it is time for a new leadership to take the helm.

## BJP SWEEPS SC-ST SEATS IN BENGAL, ASSAM

**NEW DELHI**

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has achieved a massive consolidation of power in the eastern states, sweeping seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in West Bengal and Assam. This decisive shift, revealed in the 2026 Assembly election results, highlights a major political realignment as the BJP prepares to form its first-ever government in West Bengal. In West Bengal, the BJP won 75 percent of the 68 SC seats and pulled off a clean sweep of all 16 ST seats. This overwhelming support from Dalit and tribal communities, particularly in regions like North Bengal and Junglemahal, was a primary engine behind the party's historic total of 207 seats. The Matua community also remained a critical pillar of support, helping the BJP dominate border constituencies and reducing the Trinamool Congress (TMC) to just 17 reserved seats overall.The story was similar in Assam, where the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) secured a third consecutive victory. The alliance won 8 out of 9 SC seats and all 19 ST seats, showcasing total dominance in the hill regions and Upper Assam. Political analysts point to the recent redrawing of constituency boundaries.

## NIA probes back to back blasts near military sites in Punjab

**AMRITSAR**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has officially stepped in to investigate two mysterious explosions that rattled Punjab. Specialized teams are currently en route to the blast sites to collect forensic evidence and assist local police in uncovering whether these incidents are part of a larger terror conspiracy. The blasts occurred within hours of each other, targeting areas near high-security military installations A low-intensity explosion occurred outside the Border Security Force (BSF) Punjab Frontier headquarters. A parked scooter reportedly caught fire and was ripped apart by the blast, damaging a traffic signal and nearby shop windows. A second blast was reported near the Army Cantonment in Khasa. Preliminary checks suggest an explosive device was hurled at the boundary wall, causing a tin sheet to collapse. While no casualties have been reported, security has been beefed up across Punjab. The NIA and state forensic teams are now analyzing samples to determine the exact type of explosives used and to track.

# NIA blocks dangerous biological attack by ISIS

**NEW DELHI**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a major chargesheet against three men linked to ISIS for planning a terrifying "bioterrorism" plot.

The group allegedly aimed to carry out mass poisonings in public spaces using a deadly toxin called ricin.

This dangerous chemical, derived from castor seeds, is strictly regulated and can be fatal even in small amounts.

The main accused, Dr. Syed Ahmed Mohiuddin, a China-educated doctor from Hyderabad, was caught with illegal weapons and four liters of castor oil during a traffic stop in late 2025. Investigations revealed that Mohiuddin had turned his home into a secret lab to produce the poison. He was reportedly promised a high-ranking leadership role within the terrorist organization in exchange for executing the attack.

The other two men, Azad and Mohammad Suhel from Uttar Pradesh, served as the logistical backbone of the operation. They allegedly collected illegal guns and money from secret drop-off points in Rajasthan and delivered them to Gujarat. Suhel acted as a key link between foreign handlers and local recruits, managing funds and recording oaths of loyalty to the banned group.

The NIA took over the case in January and found that the trio worked under the direct guidance of overseas handlers. By tracking their digital footprints and physical movements, the agency successfully dismantled the cell before they could release the toxin. While the three are now facing serious terror charges in court, officials are continuing to track down the international handlers involved in this disturbing conspiracy.

## NHRC orders urgent report on medical safety, work hours

**NEW DELHI**

In a major step toward healthcare reform, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a stern directive to the Union Health Ministry regarding the tragic RG Kar Medical College case. The Commission has demanded a full compliance report within four weeks, investigating why previous orders to improve doctor safety and working conditions have not been met.The NHRC’s move follows a complaint by the United Doctors' Front (UDF), which highlighted the systemic failure that led to the death of a young postgraduate doctor in August 2024. The Commission warned that if the Ministry fails to respond this time, senior officials will be summoned to appear in person under the Protection of Human Rights Act.

**Key issues raised by Commission**

- Accountability: Identification and punishment of officials responsible for the safety lapses at RG Kar Medical College.
- Work Hours: Strict enforcement of duty-hour regulations to stop the “institutionalized exploitation” of resident doctors.
- Audit Systems: Calls for the National Medical Commission (NMC) to conduct surprise audits of hospitals to ensure doctors aren’t working illegal 80–100 hour weeks.

RARE CURES, REAL PROGRESS

# *Delhi hosts meet on rare diseases*

**NEW DELHI**

The Union Health Ministry concluded a landmark two-day National Conference on Rare Diseases, focusing on bringing better care and modern technology to patients across India.

Health officials, doctors, and researchers gathered in the capital to find new ways to tackle the unique challenges faced by those living with rare medical conditions.

Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava shared that India is now part of a select group of nations with a structured plan for these diseases. To make a real difference, the government has increased financial aid to ₹50 lakh per patient. They have also removed import taxes on several life-saving medicines to make them more affordable.

The Secretary urged local leaders to start awareness campaigns in more districts so that families can get help early.

A major focus of the event was early diagnosis. Experts noted that genetic testing is key to stopping diseases before they become severe. So

far, nearly 1,800 patients have received direct support through government programs.

Dr. Rajiv Bahl from ICMR added that India is making great strides in research, including gene therapy and new treatments that were once only available in the wealthiest nations.

The conference ended with a call for a stronger, more connected healthcare system. Officials emphasized that for rare diseases, every day counts.

By building better networks and supporting local innovation, the government aims to ensure that no patient is left behind due to the high cost or complexity of their treatment.

QUICK READ

## India-EU aim to boost strategic partnership

**New Delhi**

India and the European Union held discussions in the capital to strengthen their strategic partnership. Secretary (West) Sibi George met EU Special Envoy for the Indo-Pacific Maria Castillo Fernandez, focusing on deepening cooperation between the two sides. Officials said the talks were aimed at expanding ties in key areas of mutual interest. India and the EU have recently advanced negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement, seen as an important step in economic relations. Leaders from both sides have also stressed continued engagement and stronger collaboration across trade, technology, climate change, and global governance issues.

## Japan reports fourth swine fever case this year

**Tokyo**

Japan has confirmed a new outbreak of swine fever at a pig farm in Shizuoka prefecture, marking the fourth case in the country this year. Authorities said nearly 3,000 pigs at the Fujinomiya farm will be culled to prevent the spread of the disease. The infection was detected after reports of piglet deaths, and tests confirmed classical swine fever. Officials have launched an investigation to trace the source and strengthen biosecurity measures, including disinfection and wildlife control. While the disease does not affect humans, it is highly contagious among pigs and poses a serious risk to farming and food security.

# India-Vietnam elevate ties to boost strategic partnership

PM Modi said the two countries have a common outlook for the Indo-Pacific and both sides will continue to contribute to the rule-of-law, peace, stability, and prosperity

**NEW DELHI**

India and Vietnam have significantly boosted their diplomatic and military relationship, elevating their bond to an Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

The announcement came following high-level meetings between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vietnamese President To Lam, as well as a focused defense dialogue between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his counterpart, Gen Phan Van Giang.

President To Lam's three-day state visit, his first since taking office, marks the 10th anniversary of the existing strategic partnership. The day was defined by a series of landmark agreements aimed at counterbalancing regional challenges and driving economic growth.

**'Standing together against terrorism'**

During the talks at Hyderabad House, PM Modi expressed his gratitude to Vietnam for its strong condemnation of the recent Pahalgam terrorist attack. The MEA noted that both nations are committed to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" that serves as a pillar for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

This visit reinforces India's "Act East" policy, positioning Vietnam as a core pillar in India's regional strategy as both nations navigate a complex geopolitical landscape.

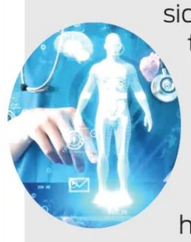
### Key outcomes of the summit

- Economic Ambitions: The leaders set a bold target to expand bilateral trade to $25 billion by 2030. In a move benefiting the agricultural sector, market access was granted for Indian grapes and Vietnamese durians.
- Defense & Security: Rajnath Singh and Gen Phan Van Giang discussed "adding more vigour" to military cooperation. India reiterated its commitment to deepening the strategic partnership, with focus areas including maritime security and joint development.
- Cultural Support: PM Modi announced Indian assistance for a Site Interpretation Centre at the My Son Temple Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Vietnam.
- Strategic Initiatives: Vietnam officially joined the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), signaling closer alignment on maritime stability.
- Science & Energy: Discussions covered critical areas such as rare earth minerals, space exploration, and renewable energy, including atomic energy.

### Both countries ink digital health ties

**NEW DELHI**

India and Vietnam reaffirmed their cooperation in health and digital payments, aiming to improve healthcare services and boost technology use between the two countries. They discussed linking UPI-based payment systems with Vietnam's digital platforms to make transactions easier for tourists and businesses. Both sides also focused on improving healthcare through artificial intelligence and stronger use of digital tools.



The leaders appreciated India's pharmaceutical industry and explored future participation of Indian companies in supplying medicines to Vietnam's public health system from 2027. They also agreed to exchange knowledge in traditional medicine and support academic collaboration in Ayurveda. Officials said both countries will work together in areas like space, 6G, biotechnology, and clean energy. They also welcomed cooperation in rare earth materials and disaster management systems. The agreement is expected to strengthen economic ties and support modern healthcare development while promoting innovation and easier financial connectivity between India and Vietnam.

# Pak HIV surge exposes health system failure

**ISLAMABAD**

The rapid rise of HIV cases in Pakistan shows a deep system failure in public health, unfolding in real time across the country. Experts say many infections are not linked to risky behavior but are caused by unsafe medical practices meant to protect patients.

Reports highlight collapse of infection control in clinics and hospitals, along with continued reuse of syringes despite a 2021 ban.

Outbreaks have been recorded in Larkana, Multan, Karachi and Taunsa, where even young children were found infected after medical visits. Doctors believe contaminated injections and poor hygiene are the main preventable causes behind the growing number of HIV cases. Medical groups have warned about fake or wrongly labeled syringes entering supply chains, raising serious concerns about regulatory failure. Health officials and hospitals are also criticized for poor transparency and weak data sharing across provincial health systems. At the PIMS HIV center, doctors report rising patient numbers and express special concern over infections among children. Officials say more testing has led to higher case detection, though experts still warn about hidden spread of disease.

**Pakistan's rising HIV crisis exposes severe public health failures, as unsafe medical practices, syringe reuse, and regulatory lapses continue to infect children and vulnerable populations**

Since October 2025, 189 people have tested positive, including men, women, transgender individuals, and several children across the country. Public health experts urge urgent reforms, stronger monitoring of clinics, strict enforcement of syringe safety rules, and greater accountability from authorities to stop preventable infections. They warn that without immediate action, more children and vulnerable people will continue to contract HIV through unsafe healthcare practices that should never occur anywhere in modern times again.

*China's economic growth is slowing as weak consumer spending and a shrinking, aging workforce create deep structural challenges*

# CHINA'S GROWTH ENGINE COOLS AMID AGING CRISIS

**NEW DELHI**

China's once-unstoppable economic engine is losing steam, with a new report highlighting that weak consumer spending and a shrinking workforce are creating "deeper structural challenges."

Despite a headline growth rate of around 5% throughout 2025 and into early 2026, the underlying data suggests the country is entering a phase of significantly slower, more limited expansion.

The report identifies a major shift in China's economic DNA. For decades, growth was fueled by massive investments and a seemingly endless supply of young workers. As of now, that model is broken. Domestic demand has softened, and fixed investment, a long-time driver of the economy, actually turned negative in 2025. This reflects a growing malaise among Chinese households, where

people are simply not buying enough to sustain the old growth targets.

The World Bank currently projects growth to moderate further, hitting roughly 4.4% by the end of 2026. While China is investing heavily in automation and high-tech manufacturing to offset its labor shortage, experts warn that these "fixes" may not be enough to return to the high-growth era of the past decade. For the global economy, a slower China means lower demand for commodities and a potential shift in where the world's manufacturing power lies.

### The double blow: Spending and demographics

- Persistent Weak Demand: Household spending remains the biggest concern. Despite government efforts to pivot toward a consumer-driven economy, global uncertainty and domestic property sector woes have kept citizens cautious with their wallets.
- The Aging Trap: China's population is both aging and shrinking. With the working-age population in steady decline, the country can no longer rely on a "demographic dividend." Productivity must now do the heavy lifting, but even productivity gains have begun to slow.
- External Pressures: Historically, exports saved the day, but that safety net is fraying. Rising trade barriers, particularly from the U.S., and the relocation of manufacturing to Southeast Asia are eating into China's competitive edge.

# East Turkistan groups petition UN to recognize region as occupied territory

**WASHINGTON DC**

In a historic move, the East Turkistan Government-in-Exile (ETGE) and the East Turkistan National Movement (ETNM) have formally petitioned the United Nations to recognize the region, referred to by China as Xinjiang, as a Non-Self-Governing Territory.

This is the first time a formal request has been made to the UN Special Committee on Decolonization to challenge China's status as a colonial power.

The petition argues that East Turkistan was an independent republic before it was "invaded and occupied" by the People's Republic of China in 1949. By seeking this inscription, the ETGE hopes to trigger an international framework that would obligate the UN to oversee the region's path toward self-determination.

**Demands to the UN**

The 25-page petition outlines eight major demands, most notably calling on the General Assembly to designate China as an "occupying power" and to address China's inherent conflict of interest as both a Permanent Member of the Security Council and a participant in the Decolonization Committee.

"More than eighty nations achieved their independence through the decolonization framework," stated ETGE President Mamtimin Ala. "Today, the peoples of East Turkistan formally assert that same right." While China maintains its policies are focused on counter-terrorism and economic development, this petition marks a significant escalation in the international legal battle over the region's sovereignty.

### Key arguments and allegations

- Demographic Shifts: The ETGE claims that since 1949, Chinese settlers have increased from 5% to over 42% of the population, while the native Turkic population has dropped from 90% to roughly 55%.
- Ongoing "Genocide": The petition asserts that Turkic groups, including Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and Kyrgyz, are entering their 13th year of "genocide." It cites a 2022 UN report stating that Chinese actions in the region "may constitute crimes against humanity."
- Forced Labor: Activists pointed to 2026 reports from UN Special Rapporteurs warning that forced labor transfers—projected at 13.75 million—could amount to "enslavement."
- Legislative Assimilation: The ETGE highlighted the "Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress," adopted by China on March 12, 2026. Critics argue this law institutionalizes the erasure of distinct minority cultures in favor of a single Chinese national identity.

# Trade pact with US sparks outrage in Dhaka

**NEW DELHI**

A newly signed trade agreement between Bangladesh and the United States is facing a firestorm of criticism in Dhaka, with politicians and economists labeling it a "one-sided" deal that compromises national sovereignty.

Signed on February 9, just days before Bangladesh's national elections, the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) is now the subject of intense debate in the country's parliament.

A report highlighted a staggering linguistic imbalance in the 32-page document. Legal experts pointed out that the mandatory term "shall" appears 179 times, while the discretionary "will" appears only three times. Most notably, the phrase "Bangladesh shall" is used 131 times, whereas "US shall" appears only six times, suggesting that the bulk of the obligations fall solely on Dhaka.

**Political and economic backlash**

Member of Parliament Rumeen Farhana has formally called for the agreement to be scrapped, a sentiment echoed by various political organizations. While the agreement has not yet officially come into force, reports indicate that Bangladesh has already begun signing deals to import goods under its provisions, further fueling public suspicion.

Economists are urging the government to pause implementation and re-enter negotiations to reach a more balanced solution. Critics argue that the timing of the signing, paired with a US Supreme Court ruling on February 20 that annulled reciprocal tariffs, leaves Bangladesh in a vulnerable position with little to show in return for major concessions.

# Dutch navy visit boosts India-Netherlands maritime ties

**KOCHI**

The Royal Netherlands Navy ship HNLMS De Ruyter arrived in Kochi on May 4 along with a high-level Dutch naval delegation marking stronger maritime ties between India and the Netherlands. Officials said the visit reflects growing cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

It is a De Zeven Provincien-class frigate escorted by Indian Navy fast interceptor craft and received a ceremonial welcome at Kochi harbour including a naval band. The Dutch delegation includes senior officers and diplomats including Major General Rob De Wit and Ambassador Marisa Gerards.

They met officials at the Southern Naval Command to discuss maritime cooperation training and future exercises.

They met officials at the Southern Naval Command to discuss maritime cooperation training and future exercises. As part of the visit the delegation also paid tribute at the War Memorial in Kochi on the Netherlands National Remembrance Day by laying wreaths honoring those who died in service.

They will also visit Cochin Shipyard Limited to learn about India's shipbuilding strength and explore industrial cooperation opportunities between the two countries. The Dutch ship is on a five-month Indo-Pacific deployment and will take part in joint exercises with partner navies improving coordination and interoperability. Before departure it will conduct a Passage Exercise with an Indian naval ship further strengthening operational ties at sea.

Officials said the visit shows the growing partnership between India and the Netherlands in maritime security training exchange and regional stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Both sides expect continued cooperation through joint exercises ship visits and professional exchanges that will strengthen trust and readiness in future naval operations.

HOUR OF LOSS

# *Afghan's maternal crisis: One death every hour*

**KABUL**

In a heart-wrenching report released, the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that a mother dies from preventable complications every single hour in Afghanistan.

Despite some progress over the last two decades, the country still suffers from one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, 521 deaths per 100,000 live births.

Most of these tragedies are caused by treatable conditions such as hemorrhage, hypertension, and obstructed labor. For those who survive, the physical and social toll is often devastating. A major focus of the report is obstetric fistula, a painful condition caused by prolonged labor that often leads to social isolation. To combat this, the WHO, supported by the Islamic Development Bank, has established two specialized treatment centers in Kabul and Kandahar.

**Progress vs Crisis: A statistical look**

| Metric | Past (Late 2000s) | Present (2026) |
|---|---|---|
| Antenatal Care Coverage | 31% | 76% |
| Births with Skilled Workers | 24% | 67% |
| Child Mortality (per 1,000) | 129 (in 2000) | 56 (in 2023) |

While the current situation is dire, the WHO noted that healthcare access has actually improved since the late 2000s:

**A looming workforce collapse**

The fragile healthcare system faces an even greater threat from ongoing restrictions on female education and employment. A recent analysis warns of a massive shortage of professionals by 2030:

UNICEF emphasized that the declining number of women in civil service, dropping from 21% to 17.7% in just two years, is creating a "double crisis" where the country loses its current experts and prevents the next generation from ever taking their place. Without urgent intervention to allow girls back into secondary schools and universities, the modest health gains of the past 20 years could completely vanish.

- Potential Losses: Up to 25,000 female teachers and 5,400 healthcare workers.
- Economic Impact: Restrictions are costing the country an estimated $84 million annually in lost output.
- Access Barrier: Because many women in Afghanistan cannot receive care from male doctors, the disappearance of female health workers will directly increase maternal and child deaths.

# Arsenal on Brink of History after Reaching Champions League Final

**LONDON**

Arsenal are on the cusp of a historic season after booking their place in the UEFA Champions League final for the first time in 20 years, with manager Mikel Arteta urging his side to harness their momentum in pursuit of a famous double.

A 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid at the Emirates Stadium sealed a 2-1 aggregate victory, sending the north London club into their first final since 2006. Bukayo Saka struck the decisive goal, sparking jubilant celebrations among players and fans.

Arsenal edge closer to historic double after reaching Champions League final

Arteta described a palpable shift in belief and energy around the club, calling on his players to channel that emotion into their remaining fixtures. Arsenal are also firmly in contention for the Premier League title, needing wins in their final matches to secure their first league crown since 2004.

"It's clear everyone can feel the belief. We must use it in the right way because what lies ahead is incredibly difficult, but we have the quality and conviction," Arteta said after the match.

The Gunners will travel to Budapest for the final on May 30, where they will face either Paris Saint-Germain or Bayern Munich. Both teams present formidable opposition, but Arsenal head into the clash buoyed by confidence and unity. The scenes at the Emirates reflected the magnitude of the achievement, with fans creating a vibrant atmosphere even before kickoff. Arteta acknowledged the supporters' role, calling the night "incredible" and unlike anything he had experienced at the stadium.

More than two decades after Arsene Wenger guided the club to domestic glory with the famed "Invincibles," Arteta appears to have rekindled that spirit. Since taking charge in 2019, he has rebuilt the team steadily, fostering a strong bond between players and supporters.

With a Champions League title and Premier League triumph still within reach, Arsenal stand just weeks away from what could become the greatest season in their 140-year history.

# Iran Seeks Assurances Ahead of FIFA WC 2026 Travel to USA

**TEHRAN**

**Iran FA demands guarantees over IRGC respect before travelling to United States.**

The head of the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran, Mehdi Taj, has called on FIFA to provide firm guarantees regarding the treatment of Iranian representatives before the team travels to the United States for the FIFA World Cup 2026.

Taj said assurances are essential to ensure that symbols of Iran's political system, particularly the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, are respected during the visit.

His remarks come amid rising tensions following an incident in Canada, where an Iranian delegation reportedly faced issues at the border while attempting to attend a FIFA Congress in Vancouver.

Although Taj stated that the delegation chose to return voluntarily, Canadian authorities later confirmed that his visa had been cancelled mid-flight due to alleged links with the IRGC, which Canada designated a terrorist entity in 2024, following a similar move by the United States years earlier.

In response, FIFA Secretary-General Mattias Grafström has invited Iranian officials to Zurich on May 20 to address concerns and discuss World Cup preparations.

Taj indicated that Iran would seek "clear and binding guarantees" during the meeting to avoid a repeat of the Canada episode when travelling to the US.

"We are going to the World Cup as a qualified team, and FIFA is our host—not any individual country," Taj said, stressing that a lack of assurances could even result in Iran refusing entry at the US border.

The issue is further complicated by Washington's stance that, while Iranian players are welcome to compete, individuals with links to the IRGC may face restrictions.

The geopolitical backdrop has already cast uncertainty over Iran's participation, especially following recent regional tensions.

Despite these challenges, Iran continues preparations for the expanded 48-team tournament, co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico from June 11 to July 19. The national team is scheduled to face New Zealand, Belgium and Egypt in the group stage.

With global attention on both football and diplomacy, Iran's World Cup campaign now hinges not only on performance but also on navigating complex international relations.

## India Maintains Bilateral Sports Ban With Pakistan, Allows Multilateral Participation

**NEW DELHI**

India has reaffirmed its policy of suspending bilateral sporting ties with Pakistan while continuing to permit participation in international multi-nation events involving the neighbouring country, the government said in an official communication on Wednesday.

The directive, issued by the Sports Ministry to key bodies including the Indian Olympic Association and the Sports Authority of India, reiterates that no bilateral series — across cricket, hockey or other disciplines — will take place between India and Pakistan in either nation.

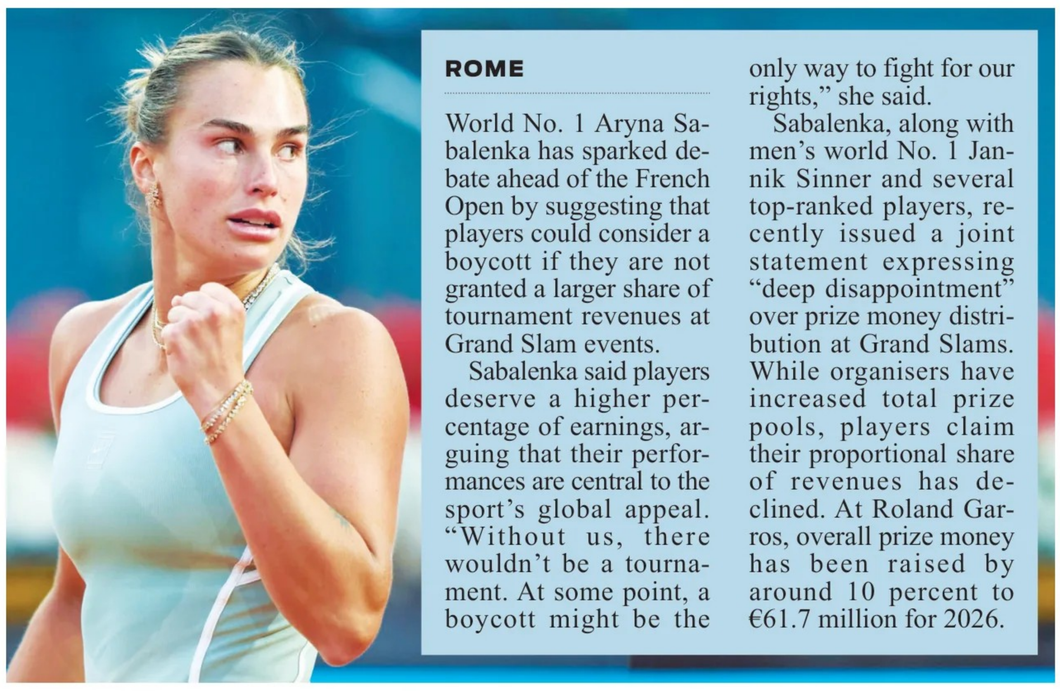
"In so far as bilateral sporting engagements are concerned, Indian teams will not travel to Pakistan, nor will Pakistani teams be permitted to play in India," the ministry stated, underlining that the existing restrictions remain unchanged.

However, the government clarified that India will continue to adhere to international sporting norms, allowing both nations to compete in global and continental tournaments.

This means Indian athletes can participate in events featuring Pakistan abroad, while Pakistani athletes will be allowed entry for competitions hosted in India under multilateral frameworks.

The policy aligns with the principles of the International Olympic Committee and other global sports bodies, which emphasise inclusivity and non-discrimination in international competitions.

## Sabalenka Floats Boycott Threat Ahead of French Open over Revenue Share



**ROME**

World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka has sparked debate ahead of the French Open by suggesting that players could consider a boycott if they are not granted a larger share of tournament revenues at Grand Slam events.

Sabalenka said players deserve a higher percentage of earnings, arguing that their performances are central to the sport's global appeal. "Without us, there wouldn't be a tournament. At some point, a boycott might be the only way to fight for our rights," she said.

Sabalenka, along with men's world No. 1 Jannik Sinner and several top-ranked players, recently issued a joint statement expressing "deep disappointment" over prize money distribution at Grand Slams. While organisers have increased total prize pools, players claim their proportional share of revenues has declined. At Roland Garros, overall prize money has been raised by around 10 percent to €61.7 million for 2026.

# 'NOBODY NOTICED': INDIA'S THOMAS CUP HEROES LAMENT LACK OF RECOGNITION

**HYDERABAD**

India's badminton stars, fresh from a historic bronze medal at the Thomas Cup, have voiced deep disappointment over the lack of public recognition upon their return, highlighting the sport's struggle for attention in a cricket-dominated landscape.

Men's doubles ace Satwiksairaj Rankireddy revealed that the team's homecoming was marked by indifference, with fellow passengers at the airport unaware of their achievement. "Nobody even asked who we were or what we had done," he said, noting that many were preoccupied with the Indian Premier League and political discussions.

The Indian squad, featuring prominent names like Chirag Shetty, Lakshya Sen and Kidambi Srikanth, had secured a commendable podium finish in one of badminton's most prestigious team events. Yet, the players found themselves booking cabs at the airport without any fanfare or acknowledgment.

Rankireddy admitted the experience was disheartening enough to make him question the future of the sport in India. "It's tough to keep going when people don't realise how big this achievement is," he said, adding that such moments can test an athlete's mental resilience.

His partner Shetty echoed the sentiment, saying the issue was not about expecting grand celebrations but about a basic level of awareness. "It's the feeling that nobody cares. Those who follow badminton understand, but the general public doesn't grasp the magnitude," he remarked.

The duo also reflected on India's 2022 Thomas Cup triumph, which, despite being a landmark achievement, did not receive sustained nationwide celebration. They stressed that while government support and federation initiatives have improved, broader public engagement remains lacking.

Rankireddy went a step further, expressing concern about encouraging future generations to take up the sport professionally amid limited recognition.

Despite the disappointment, the team acknowledged small gestures of appreciation at training centres as meaningful.

The episode has reignited debate about India's sporting culture, underlining the need to celebrate achievements beyond cricket and build a more inclusive ecosystem for all disciplines.

## Athletic Bilbao Appoint Edin Terzic as Head Coach Until 2028

**BILBAO**

**Bilbao turn to Terzic to revive campaign with attacking football philosophy**

Athletic Bilbao have appointed Edin Terzic as their new head coach from next season, with the former Borussia Dortmund boss signing a contract that runs until 2028.

Terzic replaces long-serving manager Ernesto Valverde, with Bilbao currently positioned eighth in the La Liga standings. The appointment signals a strategic shift as the Basque club looks to build a more dynamic and competitive side.

The 43-year-old arrives with a strong reputation for implementing high-intensity, attacking football. During his tenure at Dortmund, Terzic guided the German side to the DFB-Pokal title in 2021 and a memorable run to the UEFA Champions League final in 2024, where they finished runners-up to Real Madrid. Despite stepping away from Dortmund at the end of the 2023–24 season, Terzic remained a highly sought-after coach due to his tactical acumen and ability to develop young talent. His appointment is expected to bring renewed energy to Bilbao, a club known for its unique identity and emphasis on homegrown players.

Club officials believe Terzic's philosophy aligns well with Bilbao's traditions while also offering a modern tactical approach needed to compete at the highest level. His focus on pressing, quick transitions and attacking intent could help the team push for European qualification in the coming seasons.

The transition also marks the end of another chapter under Valverde, who played a key role in maintaining Bilbao's stability and competitiveness in recent years. However, with the club aiming to climb higher in the standings, the move reflects a desire for evolution.

As Terzic prepares to take charge, expectations will be high among supporters eager to see a more expansive style of play. With a long-term contract in place, Bilbao are backing the German coach to lead a new era and restore the club's prominence in Spanish and European football.

## Infantino Defends WC 2026 Ticket Prices amid Fan Backlash

**BEVERLY HILLS**

FIFA president Gianni Infantino has defended the soaring ticket prices for the FIFA World Cup 2026, stating that market demand and United States resale laws justify the sharp rise, even as criticism from fan groups intensifies.

Infantino's remarks came after reports that tickets for the July 19 final, listed on FIFA's official resale platform, were being advertised at prices exceeding $2 million. He clarified that such figures reflect resale listings rather than official face-value pricing.

"If someone lists a ticket for $2 million, it doesn't mean it will sell at that price," Infantino said, adding humorously that he would personally ensure a premium experience for any buyer at such a cost.

The governing body has come under fire from supporter organisations, including Football Supporters Europe, which has labelled the pricing structure "excessive" and initiated legal action with the European Commission. Critics argue that the escalating costs risk alienating traditional fans and undermining accessibility.

Infantino, however, maintained that FIFA must operate within the realities of a competitive entertainment market, particularly in the United States, where ticket resales above face value are legally permitted. "We have to look at the market. If prices are set too low, they will simply be resold at much higher rates," he explained.

The contrast with previous tournaments has been stark. At the FIFA World Cup 2022, the most expensive final ticket was priced at around $1,600, whereas official top-tier tickets for 2026 are expected to reach approximately $11,000 before resale inflation.

# Coaches Push for Earlier College Football Playoff Finish With Key Changes

**WACO**

The American Football Coaches Association has proposed sweeping changes to the college football calendar, advocating for an earlier conclusion to the College Football Playoff season by the second Monday of January.

In a non-binding recommendation, the AFCA suggested eliminating conference championship games and reducing scheduling gaps to streamline the season. The move, discussed at the association's annual meeting, reflects growing concerns over the length of the college football calendar and its impact on student-athletes.

"The length of the season is a critical issue," the AFCA said in a statement, adding that the current structure does not align well with academic commitments or long-term athlete welfare.

While the association does not hold direct authority over NCAA or CFP governance, its membership includes Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) coaches who play an influential role in shaping policy discussions.

Among the key proposals is reducing the number of bye weeks from two to one and ensuring a minimum gap of six days between games. The AFCA also recommended maintaining a dedicated window for the traditional Army–Navy Game, while allowing flexibility for other fixtures, including playoff games, to be scheduled around it.

The group stopped short of endorsing a specific expansion size for the playoff field, currently set at 12 teams, but emphasised that future formats should maximise participation while adhering to the proposed January deadline.

The recommendations align with broader efforts to modernise college football. An NCAA committee recently suggested a 12-game regular season played over 14 weeks starting in 2027, with the schedule running from late August through Thanksgiving. Currently, the CFP extends deep into January, with the 2027 championship already slated for January 25 in Las Vegas — well beyond the timeline the AFCA is advocating. Coaches argue that condensing the calendar would improve competitive rhythm, reduce fatigue and better synchronise with academic schedules and transfer windows. While the proposals are not binding, they signal increasing momentum among coaches to reshape the structure of college football, balancing commercial growth with the well-being of players and the integrity of the sport.

## QUICK READ

### India-Japan sign pacts on health, quantum tech

**New Delhi**

India and Japan have signed agreements to enhance cooperation in health research and quantum technologies, strengthening their strategic partnership in science and innovation. The agreements were exchanged during a meeting between Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh and Japan's Minister for Science and Technology Policy Kimi Onoda in New Delhi. A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed among Indian Council of Medical Research, Department of Science and Technology (India) and Japan's AMED for health and medical devices. A Letter of Intent was also signed between Japan's Cabinet Office and DST on quantum science and technology. Both sides aim to boost joint research, innovation, and technology development in emerging fields.

### India's steel output grows 5.8% in April

**New Delhi**

India's steel sector continued its growth momentum in April, with crude steel production rising 5.8% year-on-year to 14.09 million tonnes, according to an official statement. Strong demand from infrastructure and manufacturing sectors supported the expansion, while domestic steel prices also improved across major categories. Finished steel consumption increased 8.1% to 12.99 million tonnes, reflecting robust market activity. Imports stood at 0.68 million tonnes and exports at 0.47 million tonnes, making India a marginal net importer during the month. Capacity expansion efforts continue under the National .

### ADB: Global value chains drive growth, jobs

**New Delhi**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) says global value chains have significantly boosted economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction across Asia-Pacific over the past 25 years. However, it warns that geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, and technological changes are reshaping global production networks. According to the ADB report, the region now accounts for one-third of global value chain trade, with developing economies doubling their share since 2000. While some countries are deeply integrated, others remain excluded. The report highlights resilience, sustainability, and inclusion as key priorities, stressing better infrastructure, skills, and support.

# Real estate sentiment turns cautious amid volatility

India's real estate sentiment turns cautious amid global volatility, though office market continues showing strong resilience.

**NEW DELHI**

India's real estate sector has entered a cautious phase in Q1 2026, as global macroeconomic uncertainty and rising costs begin to weigh on sentiment, according to a joint report by Knight Frank and NAREDCO.

The report shows the Current Sentiment Score dropped from 60 to 49, while the Future Sentiment Score eased to a neutral 50 from 61, reflecting moderation in stakeholder confidence across the sector.

Analysts attributed the slowdown in sentiment largely to global volatility, particularly elevated crude oil prices, which have increased construction and logistics costs, affecting project viability and profitability.

Despite stable domestic fundamentals, geopolitical uncertainty and inflationary pressures are beginning to influence both demand and supply dynamics in the real estate market.

The residential segment showed signs of cooling after a strong growth phase, with slower sales and fewer new launches in Q1 2026. Nearly 52 per cent of respondents expect housing sales to decline further in the near term, even as 73 per cent anticipate prices to remain stable or rise due to higher input costs, labour expenses, and borrowing costs.

Industry experts noted that this divergence between weakening demand and firm pricing reflects structural cost pressures rather than a demand collapse. Praveen Jain said the moderation in sentiment is a natural correction after a prolonged expansion cycle, with underlying demand still intact.

However, the office real estate segment remains resilient. Around 41 per cent of stakeholders expect improved leasing demand, while supply is projected to remain stable or increase moderately, supported by continued corporate expansion and hybrid work models.

Overall, the report suggests a short-term cooling in residential momentum, while commercial real estate continues to provide stability to the sector outlook.

- Real estate sentiment turns cautious phase
- Global volatility impacts sector confidence
- Residential demand shows signs softening
- Prices remain firm despite slowdown
- Office market continues strong resilience

# Benchmark indices rally sharply on strong global cues

**Indian markets surged strongly as Sensex and Nifty gained sharply, driven by positive global cues and sectoral buying.**

**NEW DELHI**

Indian equity markets witnessed a strong rally on Wednesday, with benchmark indices extending gains amid positive global sentiment and easing geopolitical concerns.

The market surge reflected broad-based buying across sectors, led by banking, information technology, and automobile stocks.

The BSE Sensex jumped about 941 points, while the Nifty 50 advanced nearly 298 points, reclaiming key psychological levels during the trading session. Investor sentiment remained upbeat throughout the day as global cues turned favourable and crude oil prices softened, easing inflation concerns for emerging markets like India.

Market analysts attributed the sharp rise to optimism over potential de-escalation in global geopolitical tensions, along with expectations of stable macroeconomic conditions. Foreign institutional investor activity also showed signs of improvement, adding to the positive momentum on Dalal Street.Broader markets mirrored the benchmark performance, with mid-cap and small-cap indices also recording healthy gains. This indicated strong participation from retail and institutional investors across segments rather than selective buying in large-cap stocks alone.

Banking stocks led the rally, supported by expectations of steady credit growth and improving asset quality. IT stocks gained on hopes of stable global demand, while auto stocks benefited from strong domestic demand outlook and easing input cost pressures.

Market experts noted that volatility had reduced compared to previous sessions, helping investors regain confidence. Improved global risk appetite, combined with supportive domestic fundamentals, contributed to the sustained upward movement.

Overall, the session reflected renewed bullish sentiment in Indian equities, with investors responding positively to global developments and domestic economic stability. The strong close suggests continued optimism in the near term, although analysts advise caution amid ongoing global uncertainties and upcoming economic data releases.

# India takes 'Bharat Innovates 2026' to Paris

**NEW DELHI**

Bharat Innovates 2026 gained global attention as India showcased its deep-tech startup programme at a high-level roadshow in Paris ahead of the upcoming conclave in Nice, France. The initiative aims to connect Indian innovation with global investors, research institutions, and industry leaders.

The Paris event highlighted India's rapidly growing startup ecosystem and its strong linkage with higher education and research-driven innovation. It brought together representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Embassy of India in Paris, and the Confederation of Indian Industry, along with over 50 participants from French business and innovation networks.

Key French institutions such as La French Tech, VivaTech, ESCP Business School, ESSEC Business School, INRIA, and members of the Indo-French Chamber of Commerce also participated, along with venture capital firms, legal experts, and startup ecosystem stakeholders.

Officials from India, including senior representatives from the Ministry of Education, presented the objectives and investment opportunities under Bharat Innovates 2026. They emphasised strengthening international collaboration under the India–France Special Global Strategic Partnership and expanding global engagement in frontier technologies.The programme will focus on 13 advanced technology sectors, including artificial intelligence, semiconductors, next-generation communications, advanced materials, biotechnology, space and defence technologies, and Industry 4.0 manufacturing systems. It aims to position India as a global hub for innovation-driven growth.

As part of the initiative, India will take 120 deep-tech startups to France for pilot projects, co-development opportunities, research partnerships, investment collaborations, and market access.

The conclave, announced earlier by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the India–France Year of Innovation, is scheduled to be held from June 14–16 at the Palais des Expositions in Nice, marking a major step in global startup collaboration.

# Gold, silver rise as dollar weakens globally

**MUMBAI**

Gold and silver prices rose sharply on Wednesday, gaining up to 3% in domestic and international markets amid a weaker US dollar and easing oil prices.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures (June 5) opened at around ₹1,52,000 per 10 grams, up ₹2,247 or 1.5% from the previous close. During the session, prices moved higher to ₹1,52,450 before stabilising with gains of nearly 1.8%.

Silver futures (July 3) also witnessed strong buying, opening higher at ₹2,49,316 per kg and rising further to trade above ₹2,51,000 levels, marking gains of over 3% during intraday trade.

In global markets, COMEX gold advanced nearly 2% to around $4,656 per ounce, while silver surged more than 3% to about $76.12 per ounce.

Analysts attributed the rise to weakness in the US dollar index, which fell by about 0.34% to 97.97. A softer dollar typically makes precious metals more attractive for global investors, supporting demand.

Additionally, crude oil prices remained under pressure, with Brent crude slipping over 2% and WTI crude falling around 3 per cent in the previous session.

This helped ease inflation concerns and supported bullion sentiment.

Market experts noted that gold prices also recovered after hitting a one-month low, aided by reduced geopolitical tensions and stable oil movements. However, they cautioned that elevated crude prices and expectations of prolonged high interest rates may limit further upside in the near term.Overall, the bullion market remained firm, supported by currency weakness and global economic cues, even as macroeconomic uncertainty continued to influence investor behaviour across commodities.

# BLAIZE RAISES $35 MILLION VIA STOCK OFFERING

**CALIFORNIA**

Blaize Holdings, Inc. has announced the pricing of a $35 million public offering of its common stock, aimed at strengthening its financial position and supporting general corporate needs.

The company priced the offering at $1.85 per share, issuing approximately 18.9 million shares to raise gross proceeds of about $35 million before expenses and underwriting discounts. The underwriters have also been granted a 30-day option to purchase additional shares, which could increase total proceeds.

According to the announcement, the offering is expected to close on May 7, 2026, subject to standard closing conditions.

The capital raised will be used for working capital and general corporate purposes, reflecting the company's ongoing funding requirements as it scales operations in the AI computing sector.

The move comes as Blaize continues to expand its programmable AI platform, targeting applications across edge computing, data centers, industrial automation, and smart infrastructure.

The company has been positioning itself in the competitive AI hardware space, where demand for efficient inference computing is rising rapidly.

Market data shows that the offering is part of a broader trend of AI-focused firms tapping public markets for liquidity amid high capital expenditure needs. Analysts note that such equity raises often lead to short-term dilution but provide essential funding for long-term growth initiatives.Northland Capital Markets is serving as sole bookrunning manager for the offering, with The Benchmark Company LLC acting as co-manager.Overall, the offering highlights Blaize's strategy to secure additional capital while pursuing expansion in the fast-growing artificial intelligence infrastructure market.

# Goyal discusses Airbus India aerospace push

**NEW DELHI**

Piyush Goyal held discussions with the India leadership of Airbus focusing on strengthening aerospace manufacturing and expanding Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) capabilities in India. The meeting underlined growing collaboration between India and global aviation majors to build a stronger domestic aerospace ecosystem.

During the interaction, emphasis was placed on increasing local sourcing, boosting aircraft component manufacturing, and developing India as a global hub for aviation services. A key focus area was the expansion of MRO infrastructure, which is seen as critical for reducing dependency on overseas maintenance facilities and improving turnaround times for airlines operating in India.

Officials also discussed deepening supply chain integration and enhancing skill development initiatives to support advanced aerospace manufacturing.

The engagement aligns with India's broader push under the Make in India initiative to attract high-technology investments and strengthen domestic industrial capabilities.

India has been actively working with global aerospace firms on major projects, including aircraft assembly lines and component manufacturing units.

The country is also expanding its role in civil aviation support services, with several new MRO facilities being set up in recent years across key aviation hubs.Experts note that India's aviation market is one of the fastest-growing globally, creating strong demand for maintenance services, aircraft parts, and skilled aerospace engineers.

This makes MRO and manufacturing collaboration with companies like Airbus strategically important.

Overall, the meeting reflects India's intent to position itself as a major global aerospace manufacturing and services hub, while also strengthening self-reliance in critical aviation technologies and infrastructure.

# ASEAN urged to diversify energy ties amid crisis

**NEW DELHI**

A recent report has highlighted the need for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to strengthen energy diversification and build partnerships with reliable middle powers, including India, following disruptions caused by the West Asia crisis.ASEAN has been advised to reduce dependency on vulnerable supply chains after geopolitical tensions in West Asia exposed weaknesses in global energy security. The crisis, triggered by conflicts involving the Strait of Hormuz, has significantly impacted energy flows to several Southeast Asian economies.

The report, cited by Malaysian media outlet Bernama, quotes Associate Professor Rahul Mishra of Jawaharlal Nehru University, who stressed that ASEAN countries should deepen cooperation with middle and emerging powers in the Indo-Pacific region. He specifically mentioned India, Japan, Australia, Turkey, and the European Union as potential strategic energy partners.

**CHIP PRODUCTION PUSH**

# *'Suchi Semicon fully committed to India Semiconductor Mission'*

**NEW DELHI**

Suchi Semicon has expressed strong commitment to India's semiconductor ambitions after the Union Cabinet approved its new project in Gujarat under the India Strategic chip production push.

The project, with an outlay of around ₹868 crore, is part of a broader push to strengthen domestic chip manufacturing.

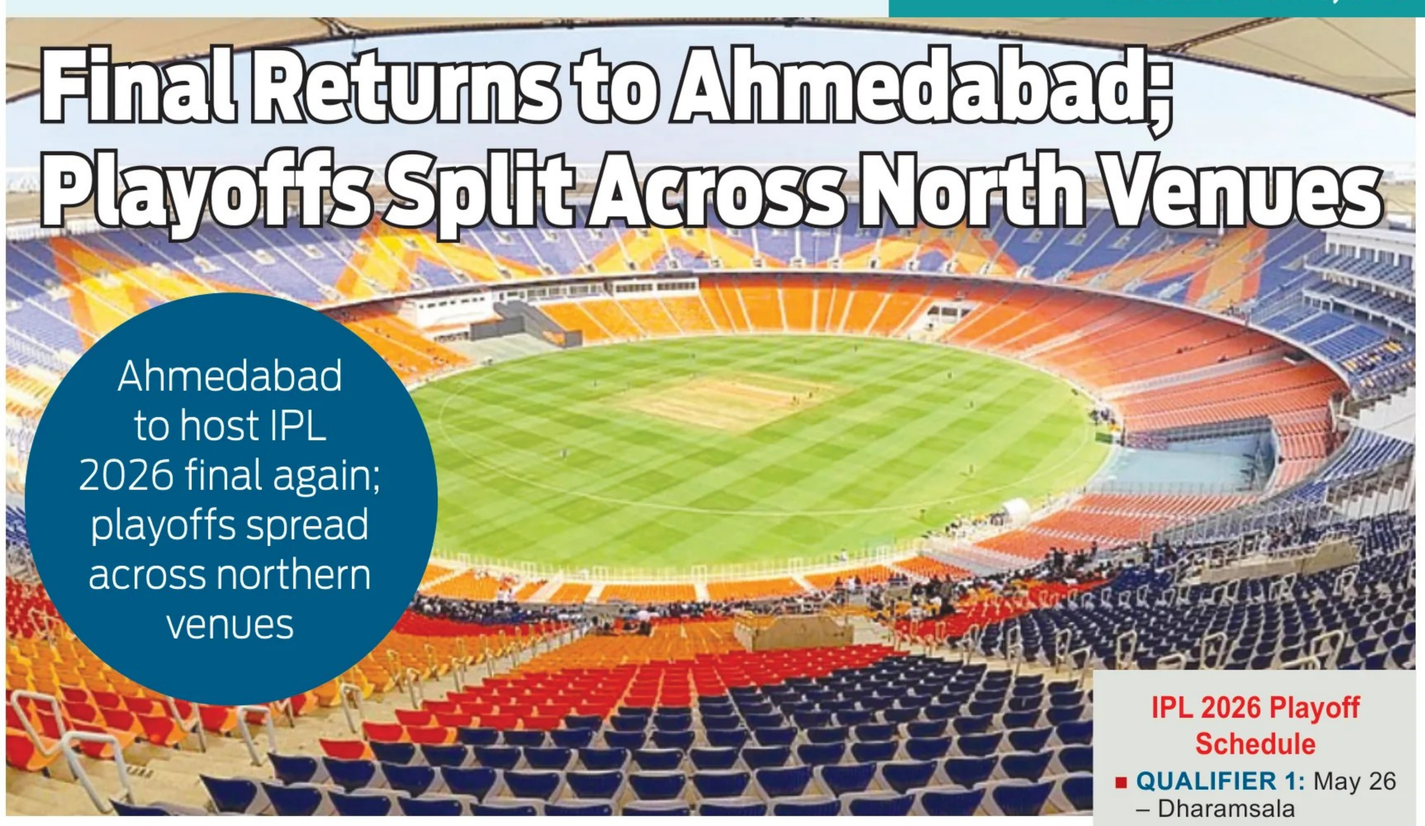
The Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved two semiconductor projects — Crystal Matrix Limited and Suchi Semicon — with a combined investment of nearly ₹3,936 crore. Together, these initiatives are expected to generate employment for about 2,230 skilled professionals and strengthen India's electronics manufacturing ecosystem.

Founder and Chairman Ashok Mehta said the approval marks a significant milestone for the company and contributes to India's long-term goal of building self-reliant capabilities in a strategically important sector. He emphasised that semiconductors power essential technologies ranging from vehicles and industrial machinery to communication devices and defence systems.

Under the mission framework, Suchi Semicon is establishing an Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility in Surat, Gujarat. The unit will cater to domestic and global demand across power electronics, analog integrated circuits, and industrial applications, supporting supply chain resilience.

Industry experts noted that the addition of advanced semiconductor segments such as compound semiconductors, Mini/Micro-LED manufacturing, and GaN-based technologies will strengthen India's position in next-generation electronics. These developments are expected to reduce import dependence while boosting innovation and high-skilled job creation.

# Final Returns to Ahmedabad; Playoffs Split Across North Venues



Ahmedabad to host IPL 2026 final again; playoffs spread across northern venues

**IPL 2026 Playoff Schedule**

- **QUALIFIER 1:** May 26 – Dharamsala
- **ELIMINATOR:** May 27 – New Chandigarh
- **QUALIFIER 2:** May 29 – New Chandigarh
- **FINAL:** May 31 – Ahmedabad

**AHMEDABAD**

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has confirmed that the grand finale of the Indian Premier League 2026 will be held at the iconic Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on May 31, marking the second consecutive year the venue hosts the summit clash.

The world's largest cricket stadium continues to cement its status as the premier destination for marquee matches, having also staged finals in 2022 and 2023. With its massive capacity and modern infrastructure, Ahmedabad has become a preferred choice for high-stakes encounters.

According to the BCCI schedule, the playoff phase will be distributed across northern venues. Qualifier 1, featuring the top two teams of the league stage, will take place on May 26 at the HPCA Stadium in Dharamsala. The winner of this clash will secure a direct berth in the final.

The action will then shift to the New International Cricket Stadium in New Chandigarh, which is set to host the Eliminator on May 27 between the third and fourth-placed teams. The same venue will also stage Qualifier 2 on May 29, where the loser of Qualifier 1 will face the winner of the Eliminator for the remaining spot in the final.

This multi-city playoff format aims to enhance fan engagement while showcasing cricketing infrastructure across regions. Dharamsala's scenic setting and New Chandigarh's emerging venue add variety to the high-octane knockout stage.

The tournament will culminate in what promises to be a blockbuster finale in Ahmedabad, with expectations of a packed stadium and a global television audience. The BCCI emphasised that the final at Narendra Modi Stadium will provide a fitting conclusion to another thrilling IPL season.

# IPL 2026: RCB Eye Batting Revival Against Struggling LSG in Crucial Reverse Fixture

**RCB aim to bounce back strongly as LSG battle poor form ahead.**

**BENGALURU**

Second-placed Royal Challengers Bengaluru will look to rediscover their batting fluency when they take on bottom-placed Lucknow Super Giants in a crucial reverse fixture of the Indian Premier League 2026 on Thursday.

With five teams tied on 12 points, the playoff race has intensified, making every game pivotal. RCB enter the contest after a disappointing four-wicket loss to Gujarat Titans, where a dramatic middle-order collapse saw them slump from 79 for 2 to 96 for 6, eventually folding for 155.

Despite that setback, RCB's batting has been one of their strengths this season. Virat Kohli has led the charge with 379 runs, while Devdutt Padikkal and skipper Rajat Patidar have chipped in with valuable contributions. With Phil Salt sidelined due to injury, young Jacob Bethell will be expected to provide aggressive starts alongside Kohli.

RCB will also benefit from a week's break, entering the clash fresher than their opponents. Their bowling unit remains a formidable force, led by Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood, who have consistently delivered impactful spells. The duo notably dismantled Delhi Capitals for just 75 earlier in the tournament. Krunal Pandya has also impressed with his variations, while Suyash Sharma and Romario Shepherd add depth. In contrast, LSG's campaign has unravelled, with five losses in their last six matches leaving them at the bottom of the table. Led by Rishabh Pant, the side has struggled with inconsistency and frequent batting-order changes. Key players including Mitchell Marsh, Aiden Markram and Nicholas Pooran have failed to deliver consistently.

LSG's bowling has shown flashes of promise, with Prince Yadav and Mohsin Khan leading the wicket charts, but death-over struggles have hurt them badly. Having already defeated LSG by five wickets earlier this season, RCB will take confidence into the clash. With momentum, form and playoff stakes on the line, the contest promises to be a high-pressure encounter under lights, starting at 7:30 pm IST.

# Activist Flags 'Child Labour' Concern Over RR Prodigy SOORYAVANSHI

**NEW DELHI**

A controversy has erupted in the Indian Premier League 2026 after a social activist threatened legal action against Rajasthan Royals over the participation of teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, raising concerns over alleged "child labour".

Activist CM Shivakumar Nayak has warned of filing a First Information Report (FIR) against the IPL Governing Council, questioning how a 15-year-old has been allowed to compete in one of the world's biggest cricket leagues. Nayak claimed the young cricketer was being "exploited" and should instead prioritise his education.

"This is nothing but child labour. How can a minor be made to play in such a high-pressure professional league?" Nayak said, adding that he would pursue legal remedies against the franchise.

However, the legal position appears more nuanced. Under Indian law, while children below 14 are prohibited from working in most sectors, adolescents aged 14 to 18 are permitted to engage in non-hazardous activities under regulated conditions. Sports, including professional cricket, are generally exempt from the definition of hazardous occupations, allowing young athletes to participate with appropriate safeguards.

Despite the controversy, Sooryavanshi's rise has been nothing short of extraordinary. The left-handed batter has taken the tournament by storm with his explosive stroke play, recently smashing a blistering 36-ball century against Sunrisers Hyderabad. The knock, featuring 12 sixes and five boundaries, made him one of the fastest centurions in IPL history.

He has also etched his name in the record books as the youngest player to reach 1,000 runs in T20 cricket, achieving the milestone in just 473 balls. His fearless batting has seen him dominate top bowlers including Jasprit Bumrah, Trent Boult and Josh Hazlewood.

Adding to his growing profile, Sooryavanshi has reportedly been shortlisted among probables for India's upcoming T20I tour of Ireland.

While the legal debate continues, the young prodigy's performances have already made him one of the most talked-about figures of IPL 2026, sparking both admiration and scrutiny in equal measure.

# KSCA to Set Up Governing Council for Maharaja, Maharani T20 Leagues

**BENGALURU**

The Karnataka State Cricket Association is set to establish a dedicated Governing Council (GC) to oversee the conduct of the Maharaja and Maharani T20 tournaments, aligning its structure with models followed in leagues like the Indian Premier League.

The decision will be formalised at a Special General Meeting (SGM) scheduled for Friday, as mandated by KSCA bye-laws, which require any franchise-based T20 competition to be administered by a Governing Council. The upcoming Maharaja and Maharani Cups are slated to be held in August.

The seven-member GC will comprise a mix of ex-officio officials, elected representatives and nominees. Key members include KSCA Honorary Secretary Santosh Menon and Treasurer BN Madhukar, along with former managing committee members AV Shashidhar and MS Keshav. Anita Bhat Wagle will also be part of the panel, alongside a representative from the Accountant General's office and KSCA CEO Shubhendu Ghosh.

Interestingly, the election process for two GC posts concluded without a contest. With only Shashidhar and Keshav remaining in the fray after other candidates withdrew, both are set to be elected unopposed. KSCA officials emphasised that the process strictly follows the association's constitutional guidelines.

"This is the right way to conduct a franchise-based tournament. The Governing Council must be formed through a Special General Meeting and should administer the event," a KSCA official noted, underlining adherence to established norms.

Apart from ratifying the council, the SGM will also approve budgets for the twin tournaments.

# Rayudu Takes Charge as HCA Head of Cricket Operations, Promises Reforms

**HYDERABAD**

Former India cricketer Ambati Rayudu has been appointed head of cricket operations at the Hyderabad Cricket Association, marking a significant administrative shift aimed at revitalising the region's cricketing structure.

Rayudu, who assumes the role on a three-year term, outlined an ambitious roadmap focused on reform, transparency and professionalism. Central to his vision is the separation of cricketing matters from administrative processes, ensuring that players remain the top priority.

"I want to serve Hyderabad cricket and build a system where fairness and merit drive selection across all age groups," Rayudu said, addressing long-standing concerns over transparency. He emphasised that improving player welfare and streamlining operations would be his primary responsibilities.

One of his immediate goals is to tackle corruption and reduce human interference in decision-making. Rayudu revealed plans to introduce a structured player contract system, similar to models adopted by leading state associations, to bring accountability and stability. He also proposed automation of cricketing operations to enhance efficiency and eliminate bias.

Looking ahead, the former middle-order batter aims to establish a state-of-the-art centre of excellence, drawing inspiration from facilities in Bengaluru. He stressed the importance of open trials to identify and nurture grassroots talent, ensuring equal opportunities for aspiring cricketers across the state.

HCA secretary M. Jeevan Reddy highlighted parallel efforts to expand cricket infrastructure beyond urban centres. New grounds have been developed in Mahabubnagar and Karimnagar, while land has been acquired in Nizamabad. Plans are also underway to secure venues in Khammam, Warangal and Nalgonda in the coming months. In a bid to strengthen governance, the association has constituted a four-member anti-corruption unit headed by Retd.

# IPL 2026: Rohit's 'Unique' Comeback Powers MI Revival, Says Rickelton

**MUMBAI**

The return of Rohit Sharma has provided a timely boost to Mumbai Indians, with teammate Ryan Rickelton describing the veteran's comeback performance as "unique" in the ongoing Indian Premier League 2026.

Coming back after a three-week layoff due to a hamstring injury, Rohit wasted no time in making an impact. He stitched a commanding 143-run opening stand with Rickelton, setting the platform for Mumbai Indians' crucial victory over Lucknow Super Giants at the Wankhede Stadium.

Rickelton, who was adjudged Player of the Match, praised Rohit's effortless strokeplay and composure. "He's been on the sidelines for a while, but the way he came back and played so freely was something special. That's the chemistry we share," he said.

The South African also highlighted the effectiveness of their left-right opening combination, noting how it adds variety and pressure on opposition bowlers. "We complement each other well. We target different areas and are clear about our approach, which helps us build strong partnerships," Rickelton explained.

The Wankhede surface further aided their cause, offering ideal batting conditions that the duo exploited with precision. Their partnership not only anchored the chase but also revived Mumbai's playoff hopes after a string of disappointing results.

While it was a night to remember for Mumbai, the struggles continued for LSG skipper Rishabh Pant, who once again failed to make a significant contribution with the bat. Despite mounting scrutiny, head coach Justin Langer dismissed suggestions linking Pant's form to his hefty price tag.

"Leadership brings its own pressures, and he handles it with remarkable composure. The money has nothing to do with his performances," Langer stated, backing his captain.

For Mumbai Indians, however, the focus remains on building momentum. Rohit's return to form at a crucial juncture could prove decisive as the team pushes for a late surge into the playoffs, with renewed confidence and a settled opening combination strengthening their campaign.

# Vettori Hails Nitish's All-Round Value as Key to SRH Balance

**HYDERABAD**

Sunrisers Hyderabad head coach Daniel Vettori has underlined the importance of all-rounder Nitish Kumar, saying his presence brings crucial balance to the side and simplifies team selection in the Indian Premier League 2026.

Nitish's absence in the previous game against Kolkata Knight Riders forced SRH into a middle-order reshuffle that failed to deliver results. However, the all-rounder is set to return for the upcoming clash against Punjab Kings, providing a timely boost to the squad.

"Every team has that one player who makes selection straightforward. Nitish, much like Marco Jansen or Marcus Stoinis, offers balance and makes my life a lot easier," Vettori said, highlighting the flexibility such players bring to team combinations.

The coach noted that Nitish's dual ability allows SRH to maintain depth in both batting and bowling without compromising on either front. His return is expected to stabilise the lineup, especially in pressure situations where adaptability is key.

Looking ahead to the contest, Vettori acknowledged the challenge posed by Punjab Kings, who are currently leading the points table. He described them as a team similar in approach to SRH, relying heavily on aggressive batting to dominate matches.

"They're top of the table for a reason. Like us, they play an attacking brand of cricket and look to manage things with the ball," Vettori observed, predicting a high-scoring encounter.

He also offered insight into the mindset of bowlers in a tournament dominated by batters. With flat pitches and soaring totals becoming the norm, Vettori emphasised that success for bowlers lies in damage control rather than outright domination.

"In conditions like Hyderabad, it's not about bowling teams out cheaply but about limiting big overs. Sometimes figures like 1 for 40 can be a very good performance," he explained. As SRH gear up for a crucial phase in the tournament, Nitish's return could prove pivotal in maintaining the balance Vettori believes is essential for success in the high-intensity IPL environment.

# Samson prioritises team over ton as CSK beat DC in IPL 2026

**NEW DELHI**

Sanju Samson underlined his team-first approach after guiding Chennai Super Kings to a crucial eight-wicket win over Delhi Capitals, revealing he consciously avoided chasing a century during the IPL 2026 clash.

Samson anchored the chase with an unbeaten 87 off 52 balls on a challenging surface at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, ensuring CSK stayed on track in a must-win encounter.

His composed innings came after the visitors' bowlers restricted Delhi to 155/7, with spinners tightening the middle overs effectively.

Despite being within reach of a hundred, Samson said he chose not to focus on personal milestones.

"A hundred is always special, but I didn't want to be selfish. Winning the match for the team was more important," he said after the game.

CSK's chase had a shaky start, slipping to 45/2, but Samson steadied the innings before accelerating.

He found strong support from Kartik Sharma, with the duo stitching together an unbeaten 114-run partnership that sealed victory in just 17.3 overs.

The win marked Chennai's fifth of the season and significantly boosted their playoff hopes. Samson's consistency has been central to their campaign, with the skipper emerging as one of the leading run-scorers this season.

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